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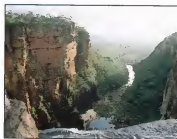
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Cover *Martin Hawes* stands before the North-west Face of one of Australia's most sought-after summits: Federation Peak, South-west Tasmania. (See articles starting on page 26.)  
*Grant Dixon*

#### WARNING

The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.



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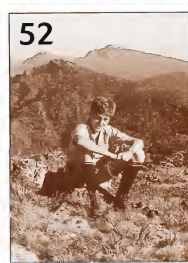
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# Waving *goodbye* to wilderness

...is about all we seem willing to do about this unique, fast-disappearing resource

**THE EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES, PARTICULARLY logging and mining as well as cattle grazing, have long been seen as the arch destroyers of wilderness. While they have certainly contributed massively, and continue to contribute, to the degradation of wilderness, during the last decade they have been quietly usurped as the primary threat to such wilderness as remains.**

Ian Stapleton, the founder of Mittagundi and Wollangarra—unique outdoor-education centres in the Victorian Alps that have taught thousands of young people the value of a simpler lifestyle, and respect for the natural environment—described the problem well in a letter he wrote to me more than four years ago. (While his comments were about the Australian Alps, unfortunately they also apply to wilderness in general.)

Stapleton writes passionately of 'our own unique mountains, their immeasurable value and importance as a source of adventure, beauty, challenge and clear water; for the generations to come, and...trying to preserve what is left of them for those very reasons'. But, he continues, it is a 'sad story of compromise that has been the fate of our mountains, mostly during [the past] 25 years, and the frightening way they have been changed in that time'. And the cause of this lamentable state of affairs? 'I...find myself having less and less confidence in the increasingly political "National Park machine", which seems unable to stop itself from encouraging ever-increasing visitor numbers to places that so obviously cannot cope with the numbers—and type—of visitors that they are already being subjected to', concludes Stapleton. By way of example, he names a number of the most important, spectacular and fragile parts of the Alps, where four-wheel-drive tracks have been 'vastly upgraded...not by loggers or for cattlemen or fire prevention, but by "the Parks" to cater for spiralling numbers of increasingly expensive and fragile four-wheel-drive super-cars'. Stapleton sees these 'armies of motorised visitors and day-tripping "ecotourists" who followed' as being 'a threat to the long-term well-being of the High Country'.

As one who has been active in the Alps and other wild places over the same period as Stapleton, I can only concur and add that while the Alps are being destroyed at a particularly alarming rate, this is the fate of every other wild place of which I am aware.

Six years ago I wrote (in the Editorial of *Wild* no 54): '...the environment has only escaped the frying-pan of wholesale development to perish in the fire of creeping development in the guise of ecotourism'. Conservationists, I suggested, had been too quick to suggest alternative commercial development to logging and the like.

The 'new economic order' with its philosophy of economic rationalism has reduced everything to its dollar value. Governments and their still-obese bureaucracies have become obsessed with turning our wild places into wilderness theme parks from which every last dollar might be wrung even if at

beauty of the bush, even paralysed ecogenarians who've never ventured further than their suburban shopping mall'. For the wilderness the result is the same—destruction. It's been death by a thousand cuts rather than instant annihilation by bulldozer and chain-saw.

But with population growth, urbanisation, increased leisure time and greater wealth, the pressures on wilderness are rapidly increasing.

Things are unlikely to change before enough people come to realise two facts:


1. Economic rationalism applied to wilderness is not only fast 'killing the golden goose' itself but in so doing has already begun to erode its economic benefits. (As Douglas Muecke put it in an article in the [defunct] *Republican*: 'Tourism, as now managed, is bad for tourism, on three counts: [First,] sites become unsightly...; secondly, destinations are degraded by being made into consumables and, thirdly, "tourists object to other tourists.") In short, that this present attitude is based on greed, ignorance and short-sightedness.

2. The concept of a 'right' to experience wilderness is arrant nonsense. In its most extreme form wilderness is accessible to only the very fittest, bravest and best prepared—after all, if it's accessible to everyone, it's not wilderness. I've visited more wilderness than some people, but readily accept that there are countless wilderness destinations which I am not qualified to visit.

For a perspective on how rapidly we are destroying wilderness consider this analogy from Greenpeace: 'Your planet is 4,600 million years old...imagine it is a person 46 years of age...Dinosaurs and reptiles did not appear until one year ago, when the planet was 45...humans have been around for four hours...The industrial revolution began a minute ago. During those 60 seconds, humankind has made a rubbish tip of paradise.'

Let's stop 'dumping' and start 'replanting' before it's too late.

## Wild people

After sweating over the management of your subscriptions in recent years, Ina Kristens is heading overseas for an extended break. We all thank her for her hard work and welcome her successor, Tony Cox. 

Chris Baxter

---

***'It's been death by a thousand cuts rather than instant annihilation by bulldozer and chain-saw.'***

---

the same time they are destroying wilderness and thus wringing the neck of the goose that lays the golden eggs. Governments and others hell-bent on profit realise that in this postindustrial age tourism is the most acceptable—and profitable—way to exploit wilderness. Private commercial development in National Parks has now become commonplace.

Roads are the greatest culprit in this wholesale destruction of wilderness. They bring motorised transport and excessive numbers of visitors (most of whom are unable, or unwilling, to accept wilderness on its own terms and thus require a substantial 'wilderness infrastructure'—an oxymoron if ever there was one!—of accommodation, sanitation, route marking, road smoothing, and an idiot-proof safety net; in short, a suburbanisation of the bush). In their wake follow other problems: litter, water pollution, erosion, thistles and blackberry infestations among them. Indeed, many of the rivers of north-east Victoria including that four-wheel-drive Mecca, the Wonnangatta, exhibit nearly all of them.

One of the problems has been the gradual, seemingly reasonable nature of this development: 'We're only upgrading an existing track', 'Of course I'd never think of taking it off road', 'Everyone has a right to experience the

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# Wild

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# Solo by day

...and collaborative campside cooking at night

I ENJOYED YOUR ARTICLES IN *WILD* NO 76 on solitary walking: 'The Wild Life and 'Gone to the Dogs'. They led me to reflect on my own solo-walking venture of several years ago when I completed a five-day walk to Mt Bogong, Victoria. Unlike your authors, my lone walk was not born of any desire to escape from the babble of companions or to face the challenge of wild terrain alone (although these motives are certainly appealing). It had simply proved difficult to entice companions over the Christmas/New Year period...

What Quentin Chester and Brian Hawkins failed to mention about bushwalking by yourself is the grind of carrying gear ordinarily shared between two or more people. Being unaccustomed to walking alone, my pack was utterly laden with a family-sized Trangia stove kit, a two-man tent plus all the usual gear, fuel and food required for a five-day walk. As I ascended the unrelenting Staircase Spur I spent more than a little time contemplating the economies of scale and relative benefits of group versus solo walking.

Nor could your authors know of another potential annoyance—stemming from being young and female and bushwalking alone, which seems somehow to heighten the curiosity of other walkers about your capabilities and state of mental well-being.

Those minor details aside, the joy of unilateral decision making and the sense you get of being unusually connected with the natural environment—even when you are following well-defined tracks in popular/established walking areas—make solitary walking really pleasurable.

My independent adventure was, however, interrupted by a phenomenon I am sure many people travelling overseas have experienced—that of attracting other lone travellers. I had passed a rather unlikely-looking fellow also walking alone not long after leaving Mountain Creek car park on day one... After exchanging a few awkward words about our intended destinations, we said so long and I walked on ahead. I spent only a brief moment pondering why *he* was walking alone.

Later the next day I discovered that the same young man was camped not far from my own site near Cleve Cole Hut... The following evening he approached and we spoke in a little more detail about the book I was reading. He went on to suggest that we pool our provisions and share a meal. His offer caught me by surprise and although I intended to say no, good manners prevailed

and it was agreed. Despite initial misgivings about relinquishing my solitude and the wonderful little cooking space I had established among the snow gums, this unexpected offer proved both enjoyable and nutritionally beneficial... The next two days pretty much mirrored this one. Day walking alone and collaborative meal preparation in the evenings...

several weeks later, politely asked to borrow it back to read. In it I read Elizabeth Haines's letter telling of an article [Track Notes] and picture in issue 74 of Precipitous Bluff. I would very much like a copy of this issue...

My husband, Wade, walked extensively in South-west Tasmania—and other places. He made several trips to Precipitous Bluff during the two years we lived in Tasmania.

Wade did not return from his last trip to Precipitous Bluff—and we have never found his body, despite one of the biggest land and air searches Tasmania has seen.

I guess his story may join another article of searches and their not always successful endings, one day—as your article on Victorian searches did in issue 75. Needless to say, pictures of Precipitous Bluff are very precious to me and, as Elizabeth points out in her letter, are hard to come by.

Thank you for this—and for your magazine and all that goes into it. When my focus of life changes from the parental responsibilities of raising four children without Wade to one of sitting quietly reading, I shall subscribe to *Wild*—and there will also be more time to don the walking shoes and follow some of the walks detailed.

Margaret Butler  
Bugaldie, NSW



On the last morning I set off purposefully along the main ridge and back down to Mountain Creek. It was a pleasure to spend inordinate amounts of time setting up that perfect photo of snow-daisy clusters just above the tree line and not to be hurrying to catch up with an impatient party of fellow walkers. Nobody questioned my decision to eat lunch at 11 am and there was nothing to disturb an indulgent kip in the early-afternoon sun at Bivouac Hut. And, of course, by this stage, with food and fuel provisions mostly spent, the pack was greatly reduced in weight. Any thought of the first day's climbing effort was a hazy sort of memory.

And so I have fond recollections of a 'solo' walking experience and never pass up an offer of collaborative campside cooking.

Pamela Walpole  
Yackandandah, Vic  
(And, if you are out there, a big hello to Steve from St Kilda.)

## Precious Precipitous

I occasionally buy your magazine and enjoy it immensely when I do. I bought issue 75 as a birthday present for a friend and then,

## Gear conspiracy?!

In response to 'Gear conspiracy' in *Wildfire*, *Wild* no 76:

Surely quality walking boots must be considered as 'optional' as water-bottles and first aid kits—an essential item for personal comfort and safety. Financial constraints are often an issue, but the correct boot will protect the walker from both injury and fatigue. Hard days on rocks either on a mountainside or on a river-bank can quickly cause fatigue, and lead to injury. Boots also protect the ankle against knocks from many hard surfaces. A wisely selected boot (properly worn in) comes close to the most essential item in the bushwalker's arsenal and will offer a near lifetime of service if maintained... I'm pleased to remain educated about my options through *Wild* advertising and sincerely recommend investing in quality footwear.

Glenn Nelson  
Box Hill North, Vic

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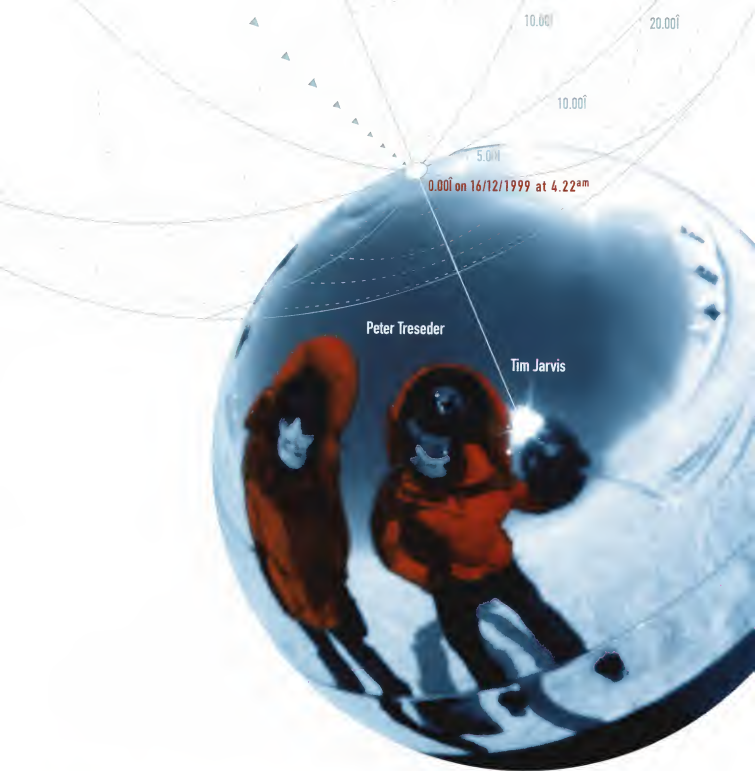
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## Going the distance

If you read *Wild* regularly, you might have noticed Anthony Evans's name crop up several times in recent issues. An Info item might have mentioned that Evans, who has been performing at the top of the field in multisport events in the last two years, is actually a three-times Winter Olympian.

Despite retiring from international competition in cross-country skiing in 1999, 31-year-old Evans, of Canberra, certainly hasn't retired from competitive sport. Although he now works full time for State Forests, he manages to train about two hours a day, six days a week for two to three months before a big multisport event. Compare that with his life as an elite athlete, when he would train full time for most of the year, working out twice a day almost every day!

Since 'retiring', Evans's greatest success was winning last year's Mt-Buller-to-Melbourne Jones Lang LaSalle Challenge, surprising himself with the record time of 12 hours and 46 minutes. In the same year he came second in the Katoomba-to-Sydney multisport race. He has competed in the Kangaroo Hoppet since it began in 1991 and has finished in almost every position in the top ten—except first!

When Evans shifted his interests to multisport events he found that the disciplines weren't so foreign because he'd run and cycled as part of his training for skiing. What was new was combining them into a multisport event over two days.

Evans had to work on his kayaking; he hadn't done much of that before. He says that one of Australia's best paddlers, Matt Coulter, in Albury, turned him into a 'half-reasonable paddler'. Running is his strong point and favourite multisport leg.

'The thing that interests me about multisport racing is the outdoors component. It's different from triathlons because you're not pounding the bitumen or cycling round and round in circles. It allows me to combine the love of the outdoors and the enjoyment of competing.'

He says that multisport events 'attract a really good group of people, mainly because you have to work very hard to complete one but at the end of the day you have to do it for yourself because there's not a lot of glory in it'.

Finally, what is the secret to Evans's multisport success? He revealed that he has one of the highest measured aerobic capacities in Australia. An obvious benefit of competing full time in endurance events for about ten years!

Naomi Peters



*Introduced into the outdoors by his bushwalking father, Anthony Evans went on to compete in three Winter Olympics in cross-country skiing.*

*In his first year of competing in multisport events he won the 1999 Mt-Buller-to-Melbourne Jones Lang LaSalle Challenge in record time. Tom Putt*



## Against the odds

Anthea Bibby reports that Melbourne kayaker Anthony Yap, 16, won the Under-18 Australian freestyle kayaking event at the Penrith Whitewater Stadium near Sydney on 13 May—in a home-made boat and in his first freestyle kayaking competition! Yap's preferred boat wasn't available in time for the competition, so his coach Russell Sheehan had the mould sent from New Zealand and they made a kayak in the backyard. A paddler since the age of 14 (and a level-seven gymnast), Yap only became active in freestyle kayaking—also known as rodeo kayaking—last September. Now in the Australian team, he aims to compete in the World Freestyle Championships in Spain next June.

*Anthony Yap won the Under-18 Australian freestyle kayaking event in Penrith in May despite competing in a home-made boat and never having performed in this type of event. He had found that 'playing on the rivers was much more fun than just running straight down them'. Yap collection*



## Doing time

Merryn Mathie reports that the Blue Mountains National Parks team won the 12th Australian Wilderness Rescue Navigation Shield in Wollemi National Park, New South Wales, on 1–2 July. They covered 59 kilometres during the 30-hour event, almost all this cross-country! The one-day event was won by the Baulkham Hills Bush Fire Brigade. Organised by Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue, the event was the largest yet, attracting 420 people in 119 teams.



*The Blue Mountains National Parks team covered 59 kilometres in 30 hours during July's Australian Wilderness Rescue Navigation Shield in Wollemi National Park. The members were (from left) Richard Delaney, Tony Garbellini, Geoff Luscombe and Ian Brown. Merryn Mathie*

Earlier, on 26–28 May, the Gurkha team from the UK won Community Aid Abroad–Oxfam's Trailwalker 2000, held over 100 kilometres of the Great North Walk in Sydney. Team Rogaine, containing champion rogaier Nigel Aylott, finished two-and-a-half hours later in 16 hours and 55 minutes. The Sydney Striders 'Girls' team, made up of three women and a man, finished third just four minutes behind Team Rogaine.

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## Protecting porters



*Is this porter equipped for snow conditions? The International Porter Protection Group, which formed in late 1997, is attempting both to make the public more aware of the needs of porters and to improve industry standards. Jim Duff*

In 1997 a young Nepali mountain porter employed by a trekking company got sick and was dismissed. It took about 30 hours for him to die, after being paid off and sent down on his own... the International Porter Protection Group was formed to prevent these recurring tragedies... With that starkly confronting mission statement we at *Wild* were introduced to this international organisation dedicated to protecting a very vulnerable group of people well known to the many readers who have trekked in Nepal. You can help this worthy cause in a number of ways. Contact the IPPG's representative for Australia, Jim Duff, by phoning (02) 6653 4241.

## Cave splash down

Systematic surveying of Splash Pot cave in the June–Florentine area of Tasmania, mainly by Dave Rasch and Jeff Butt, has resulted in sizeable extensions to the cave. Beyond the tight section called Close to the Bone—50 metres of passage which takes an hour to negotiate—they discovered a 113 metre pitch which they named 'Harrow the Marrow'. The cave was extended from -160 metres to -305 metres, making it the fourth-deepest in Australia with 1800 metres of passage length surveyed. The cave is now within 11 metres of making a connection with Khazad-Dum.

Another significant find was in Wolf Hole at Hastings, south-west of Hobart. This cave was thought to terminate at Tasmania's largest underground lake, Lake Pluto. During the recent dry conditions Tim Anderson led a group which excavated a muddy passage to extend the cave beyond Lake Pluto to discover Lake Charon, named after Pluto's moon.

Stephen Bunton

## Maps, GPSs and datums

The Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping is promoting a new datum from this year, naming it 'Geocentric Datum of Australia' (GDA). A datum is a reference point from which grid lines on maps from national and State organisations are measured. (Fine print in the margin of a map should say something like 'Horizontal Datum: Australian Geodetic Datum 1966'. Australian map makers may also use a 1984 datum, which is about seven centimetres from the 1966 datum. This slight difference does not affect bushwalkers.)

The new datum suits international Global Positioning System (GPS) users better because it is measured from the earth's centre of gravity, around which the satellites orbit. The position of a known point (given as latitude and longitude or as grid coordinates) from the new datum will appear to be about 200 metres north-east of the position given from the old datum. This is significant to bushwalkers and GPS users.

So read your maps carefully when giving or using grid references and when operating GPS units in the future; specify which datum your map and references use.

For more information, see [www.anzic.org.au/icsm/gda/brochure.htm](http://www.anzic.org.au/icsm/gda/brochure.htm)

John Poppins

## SCROGGIN

✦ Bryne Smith reports that the **Gold Coast Bushwalkers Club** celebrated its 25th anniversary in April by having 182 bushwalkers, ranging in age from 5 to 80, climb 25 peaks.

✦ Outdoors enthusiasts **Carl and Michelle Roe**, from Yeronga in Queensland, are having a honeymoon with a difference. In June they left for northern Sweden to start a 7000 kilometre walk to the west coast of Spain. The journey is expected to take about ten months. Carl is no stranger to long-distance walking trips—in 1996 he trekked from Canada to Mexico.

✦ Adventurer extraordinaire **Peter Treseder** will be touring Australia in October and November to lecture on his latest Antarctic foray. Details from the Youth Hostels Association: telephone (02) 9261 1111.

✦ A forum celebrating the rich cultural history and scientific and natural values of the **Bass Strait region** will be held

## A classic day

On 29–30 July the Active For Life Winter Classic was blessed with sunshine, excellent river levels and the best snow base in 15 years. More than 100 teams tackled the two-day, 150 kilometre adventure race from Mt Hotham to Omeo in the Victorian Alps.

Individual racer Cameron Morton, one of Australia's top-ranked skiers, led the field, reaching the Dinner Plain checkpoint in 54 minutes. The mountain run was testing with the extra snow cover; many teams, and Morton, lost valuable time navigating through the timber and across the snow plains. Descending the Great Alpine Road, cyclists raced to beat the cut-off time at the river so that their paddlers could negotiate the current to the end of day one; the fastest teams arrived six hours after the start with only 25 minutes separating the top five teams.

Team Lactic from East Gippsland had their lead slowly eaten away on day two. Cam Lester (Team Promotion) made up six minutes on the mountain bike; Chris Humfrey (Team Tatanka) gained 15 minutes in the rapids.

Team Lactic, consisting of Lenny van Berkel, Brian Wallace, Frazer Johnson and Simon Eaton, was the first team home in 9 hours, 39 minutes and 30 seconds. Team Promotion was second and Veterans Leading Edge, third. The fastest female team was the Diamantinas in 14 hours, 7 minutes and 22 seconds.

Individual racer Tom Crebbin, who has placed second or third for the past five years, won in 10 hours, 20 minutes and 12 seconds, having been the overnight leader by just two minutes. Simon Higgins was second and Mark Swoboda, third. Tanya Faux was the first individual woman home in 14 hours, 48 minutes and three seconds; Karen Hopkinson was second.

Eric Ward



Rebecca Butcher, left, and another competitor, below, in July's Winter Classic. It is hoped that international teams will compete in 2001. Both photos Mark Ashley



in Launceston, Tasmania, from 30 November to 2 December. For info, phone the Marine and Coastal Community Network on (03) 6234 3665.

✦ This year **John Henzell** hopes to ski along the Australian Alps Walking Track for most of his journey from **Wilsons Promontory**, Victoria, to the top of **Mt Kosciuszko**. His other sea-to-summit trips include Mont Blanc, Aconcagua and Mt Cook. 📍

## Corrections and amplifications

Andrew Lindblade's bio on page 41 of *Wild* no 77 should have stated that he and Athol Whimp were attempting the first direct ascent of the 'true' North Face of Jannu.

The following clarifies the water filters and purifiers survey in *Wild* no 77. First, the weight given for PUR's Voyager (310 grams) doesn't include the weight of the StopTop carbon cartridge, which is merely an accessory to remove taste and smell; the total weight is about 425 grams. Second, SweetWater's WalkAbout filter consists of microscopic borosilicate fibres in a binding resin. It is similar to ceramic technology in that it is a depth filter with a renewable surface acquired by cleaning. It is claimed that ceramic filters are more fragile and can be damaged easily by freezing and dropping. Thirdly, hepatitis B is spread by direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person.

## Wild Diary

Wild Diary listings provide information about rucksack-sports events and instruction courses run by non-commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

### September

- 29- NSWBC slalom school NSW (02) 6649 4155  
 1 Oct Nymboida Canoe Centre C  
 30- VBCE basic skills Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 1 Oct Instructor workshop C  
 Penrith Cup S NSW (02) 9552 2701

### October

- 7- 6/12-hr R (Lake Macquarie) NSW (02) 9990 3480  
 7-8 VBCE SunSmart introduction to canoeing C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 VBCE sea proficiency (Geelong) C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 NSWBC river rescue level I C ACT (02) 6254 7838  
 9-11 Snow & Outdoor Trade Show (traders only) Vic (03) 9879 8671  
 14 12-hr R SA (08) 8271 2712  
 12-hr R (Seymour area) Vic (03) 9718 2753  
 12-hr R WA (08) 9381 8608  
 14-15 VBCE basic skills instructor intake C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 NSWBC white-water instructor course Nymboida Canoe Centre C NSW (02) 6649 4155

- 16-20 NSWBC raft guides course ACT (02) 6254 7838  
 22 RC Yarra Challenge 5000 metre canoe sprint event C Vic (03) 9685 9706  
 Cyclopaire R Qld (07) 3369 1641  
 27-29 CAOA Adelaide Trailwalker 100-kilometre B SA (08) 8223 3405  
 28 VBCE river rescue level I C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 28-29 VBCE sea instructor intake C Vic (03) 9459 4277

### November

- 11 6/12-hr R ACT (02) 6295 6099  
 11-12 VBCE SunSmart introduction to canoeing C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 24-hr R Vic Champs (Mansfield) Vic (03) 9718 2753  
 12 VBCE white-water proficiency C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 19 LCK Triple Top Mountain Run (Roland Range) Tas (03) 6491 1259  
 25-26 6/12-hr R (UNSW event) NSW (02) 9990 3480  
 25-26 CE Jones Lang LaSalle Challenge (Mt Buller to Melbourne) MA Vic (02) 4739 2110

### December

- 1-2 VBCE introduction to sea kayaking C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 2 6-hr R (Maryborough) Vic (03) 9718 2753  
 2-3 VBCE SunSmart introduction to canoeing C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 VBCE basic skills instructor assessment C Vic (03) 9459 4277  
 NSWBC senior instructor/white-water instructor course Nymboida Canoe Centre C NSW (02) 6649 4155  
 NSWBC white-water instructor course ACT (02) 6254 7838  
 9-10 NSWBC river rescue level I C ACT (02) 6254 7838  
 16-17 NSWBC basic skills instructor course C ACT (02) 6254 7838  
 27-31 RC Murray Marathon C Vic/NSW (03) 9685 9339

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 Community Aid Abroad Oxfam CE Challenge Events LCK Lions Club of Kentish  
 Canoe Education RC Red Cross VBCE Victorian Board of Canoe Education NSWBC New South Wales Board of  
 rogaining associations Rogaining events are organised by Rogaining events are organised by the State  
 Skiing events are organised by Skiing Australia

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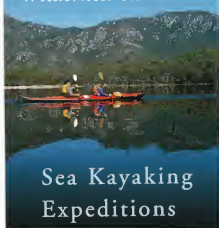
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# Lust in the dust

The truth about mating and mateship in the bush,  
by **Quentin Chester**



*Who knows what you'll disturb in the Australian bush! Cape Le Grand National Park, Western Australia. Richard King*

**DAVE AND I HAD JUST FINISHED A CLIMB** on Tiger Wall at Victoria's Mt Arapiles. We were tiptoeing along Flinders Lane, a broad ledge that traverses underneath the Bluffs, two mammoth blocks that cap 'The Mount's' proudest summit. Having managed to huff and puff our way up a long corner we were feeling perky. All around us stood the climbs of our youth. Climbs with names such as Scorpion Corner, Quo Vadis and Kama Sutra. Inspired perhaps by the memory of these and all manner of other conquests Dave turned to me with a wolfish grin and said: 'You know, I once enjoyed sexual congress on this ledge.'

This confession caught me off guard. Now I know that men are supposed to think about sex every 30 seconds—even more often if they're awake. All the same, it's not every day a compatriot actually comes clean, so to speak. Unsure what to say, I gave my best version of a knowing smile and walked on, leaving Dave staring into space. Then, eventually, there was a voice behind me. 'Ah yes, but that was a long time ago', murmured Dave, adding a footnote that echoed a thousand bad song titles: 'And we were young.'

Twenty minutes later we were back in the camping ground. The mood had passed. Our priority was lunch. It was not the time for boasting about our youthful climbs of passion and other debaucheries, at least not in front of the wives and kids. But later, as Dave and I trogged to the distant crags of

the Northern Group for an afternoon climb, my thoughts returned to the affairs of the heart and connected organs.

Gazing upwards to the cliff I saw not just a stirring array of classic climbs but hundreds of promising-looking ledges, each, I childishly imagined, with a *risqué* story like Dave's to

moments of mutual fulfilment. Indeed, in the popular imagination, the outdoors is brimful with sexual possibilities. So, it seems, you only have to show some folks a few waves breaking on the beach or some piddling, little waterfall and they're tearing each other's gear off. And where would Hollywood be

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***'If you want to ogle at gratuitous  
nudity and rampant promiscuity  
visit your local National Park.'***

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tell. If only the rocks could talk! What tales they could reveal of couples doing what couples do, naked before the mountain and all that!

Yet where do we read of such open-air goings-on? Certainly not in the annals of adventure. Based on all the wilderness yarns and expedition books I've read, it might be inferred that the simple act of donning a rucksack has a crippling effect on one's libido. Why is it that outdoors travellers portray themselves as having about as much sex drive as a eunuch frozen in pack ice from the neck down?

This is a tad surprising given that ever since the days of Adam and Eve a walk in the shrubbery has been linked with exquisite

without leafy woods where tumbling twosomes can disappear for some serious snogging? As for those High Country cabins, well now, we all know that lurking within you'll find a seductive open fire, a fluffy rug and the love muffin of your dreams—albeit with a film crew waiting to shoot another Nescafé commercial.

If these racy media images are not enough, then in the very act of getting back to nature, we are exposed to a wealth of suggestive material. They don't call it the birds and the bees for nothing. Apart from skirmishes over territory and a bit of cutesy stuff rearing off-spring, the natural world is all about sex. If you want to ogle at gratuitous nudity and rampant promiscuity visit your local Na-

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tional Park. (But be careful not to look too closely, especially you blokes. It's a grim fact that males of many species die on the job. On the other hand, you might feel envious of the humble barnacle whose old fella is 20 times his body length or the only slightly less humble paper nautilus who has a detachable willy that roams the briny in search of a bit of the other.)

In the light of all this hyperstimulation, it could be thought that sex in the wild is all the go. We humans might not have a barnacle's hard shell, alas; however, we are encrusted with centuries of social etiquette and inhibition. Accordingly, real-life opportunities for a bit of outdoors rumpy bumpy are not as abundant as you might think.

For all the wide open spaces, the wilds can be remarkably short on privacy. And it's not getting any easier. These days you have about as much chance of a furtive quickie on Flinders Lane, Mt Arapiles, as you would on the MCC during a grand final. On any given weekend the place is crawling with people. And even as Dave led off up our climb in the Northern Group, an area climbers used to visit about once a decade, the tell-tale clang and chatter of at least six other climbing parties was around us. I resolved to belay Dave without looking up. For some reason the rear view of him thrashing up the climb—his buttocks heaving against the bulging, orange stone—summoned forth unwelcome images of Dave getting his end away.

Sharing other people's most intimate moments can indeed bring conflicting responses. For example, in areas where camp-site options are limited there's every chance your tent will be just centimetres from the neighbours. For the sleep deprived—I speak from bitter experience here—few tortures can compare with being lodged next to a couple of strangers intent on giggling, squealing, moaning and grunting their way to the next sunrise.

On the other hand, I once spent an extremely informative evening seated at a picnic table in Kakadu doing my best to read the map. Meanwhile, across the way, a well-endowed young couple—Norwegians, I was later told—engaged in a marathon session of pairs rhythmic gymnastics. It's not just sound that tent fabrics transmit so effectively. A bright gas lantern inside the Norwegians' tent was perfectly angled to project an exotic shadow play on the tent's gossamer-thin fabric, a writhing performance befitting the kind of video available only from a post office box in Fyshwick. I and many other patrons of the camping ground were, of course, appalled—some of us for hours at a time.

Assuming that you can find a secluded tent site, some formidable technical challenges still remain. Chief among these is the sleeping bag. Wonderful, snugly creations they might be—but only for one. While some versions can allegedly be zipped together, this operation is so mind-numbingly intricate you soon realise that all sleeping bag designers are automatically granted Festival of Light life membership. An hour spent fiddling with twisting sliders and snagging

various fabrics and sensitive body parts in zips is guaranteed not just to dampen one's ardour but to reduce both parties to sobbing wretches.

Nevertheless, raw, seething passion does have a happy knack of overcoming even the biggest obstacles. So it is that love-struck couples are prepared to brave steep slopes, risk frostbite and rumble naked among lawyer vines and stinging trees to gratify their base desires. Still, it could be worse. You could be trying to pretend to have a romantic tryst while stuck in a budget motel room in Yass.

Doubtless, outdoors activities have also 'given rise' to enough fetishes and perversions to keep psychotherapists in business for another century or so. For example, kayakers putting a very different twist on the Eskimo Roll and climbers finding arresting, new uses for harnesses and ropes. It can only be a matter of time before there is a three-mile-high club for oxygenless copulations

It was the end of a long, hot day. It's probably just as well for us that the funny business came much later.'

Such experiences are, I suspect, pretty typical. Out bush a lot is usually happening. Which means that by the end of the day either or both of you will probably be too knackered to raise an eyebrow, let alone anything else. So if the question is popped a likely response will be: 'Oh yes, possum, darling, that would be marvellous, if only I wasn't so stuffed from climbing that bloody ridge, pitching the tent and cooking dinner in the pissing rain.'

So yes, the unglamorous truth is that camel delights generally take a bit of a back seat in the outdoors. Though in my own case this back seat proved a lot more successful than the one in my 1966 Beetle. For all my fervent

## '...the outdoors is brimful with sexual possibilities.'



**Quentin Chester**

(see Contributors in *W&L* no 3) lives to walk and writes to live. His much preferred habitat is a deep Flinders Ranges gorge where he can be found resting on sandstone close to cool, dark waterholes and abundant food sources.

on Mt Everest's summit ridge. When those jet-stream winds howl you'll be glad you packed that extra kilo of Viagra.

At long last Dave had struggled to our first belay. The climb was Touchstone, an old favourite. I dutifully followed, scampering to the climb's perched corner, happy to lose myself in the action. Lots of teetering and groping, with one final flurry and a climactic lunge. 'Was it good for you, too?' asked Dave with a smirk as I joined him on the ledge. 'Oh yes, yes!' was my panting reply.

There was one more pitch of climbing to the top, a breezy, uplifting edge of solid rock. Dave followed me, his limbs flailing, fairly racing through the moves. He arrived with cheeks puffing and the grimace of weary elation that not-so-young climbers wear.

'Great stuff,' he said as he lay on his back gazing into the clouds. 'Lots of memories.'

Curiosity got the better of me. 'Don't tell me you scored on this one as well.'

'No, no, nothing like that. My fling on Tiger Wall was strictly a one-off. No, this was the first climb with my dearly beloved.

attempts at pubs and parties I remained luckless in the wild oats department until things such as climbing and bushwalking absorbed my surplus anxieties. As my Mum was wont to say: 'Everyone needs an outlet, dear.'

Indeed, they do. Around town I was just another emotionally thwarted nymphomaniac trapped in an adolescent male body. But out bush there was a miraculous release from the tyranny of hormones. Urgencies such as saving my neck on a climb or navigating a white-out gradually sidelined the mask of surly reticence I'd worn to hide my assortment of pangs and turmoils. By accident and by degrees I became a slightly less defective social creature.

Which is why I feel an undying debt of gratitude to the bright spark who invented cliffs, timbered ranges and broad, snow-covered plains. It was in these places that I began to see people clearly and realised that it was okay to like and be liked—in spite of everything. As I see it, a relationship that can survive five days of your foot odour problem as well as a leaky tent where everyone sleeps in a wet spot probably has as good a future as any.

Oh yeah, I suppose if you're lucky you might fluke a 'lust in the dust' encounter such as Dave's on Flinders Lane. But if you're really lucky you will crack on to somebody who wants to keep going to good places as well. Someone who doesn't mind waiting while you stumble upon a few basics such as trust and respect. Of course, conjugal bliss is important and, yes, size does matter. But the touchstone moments that unchain your heart are what really make a difference. ☺

*Quentin Chester*



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TASMANIAN BUSHWALKING

# Getting Dad up Federal

Doug Johnson recalls a family operation akin to raising the *Titanic* to get him atop Tasmania's Federation Peak



# fion

IT STARTED WITH MY DAUGHTER ROSIE suggesting that she take me bushwalking early in the New Year. But where? In February the mainland is too hot and dry and New Zealand was too difficult to organise for the time available. So we settled on Tasmania. I had walked the Overland Track twice and climbed Frenchmans Cap. Rosie had plodded along the South Coast Track but Federation Peak beckoned us both. When my other daughter, Jenny, in the UK at the time, heard of our plans she uttered just two words—'I'm coming'.

Then we got down to the two big Fs—Planning and Preparation. Many people were consulted about the feasibility and practicality of getting a 61-year-old to Federation and back without firing off our EPIRB (emergency position-indicating radio beacon). Surprisingly, Rosie's boss Chris Baxter enthused although I am much shorter in the leg and longer in the tooth than he! Guidebook author John Chapman gave much practical advice about minimising the gear but maximising its effectiveness. The girls worked on a lightweight but highly calorific menu.



**Above,** Wild's Editorial Coordinator Rosie Johnson with her mountain-goat Dad, Doug. Jenny Johnson. **Pages 26 and 27,** it's hard to believe that an unroped ascent of Federation is possible when you see the peak from the Devils Thumb. Fortunately, if you approach Federation Peak from Farmhouse Creek, as we did, you're spared this view until after you've climbed the peak. Grant Dixon



I had two months to get physically prepared. My occasional five kilometre walk or jog became almost a daily ritual. I then put a 25 litre drum of water in my pack and carried that on my walks. All those long-forgotten memories of aching shoulders came flooding back and I wondered why I was doing this. Why? I am still grappling with this. A few days later I remembered to do knee-bend exercises. We had been advised to do 50 of these a day, before going to Nepal a few years ago. So I did 40 comfortably but two days later I couldn't think why I had such sore knees. I had found several muscle groups I wasn't exercising—

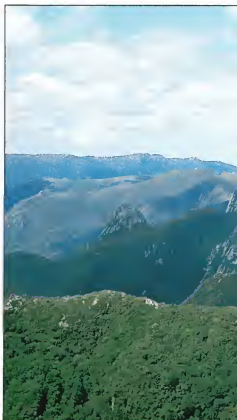
ping Adonis who, we hoped, would carry more than his fair share of the weight and could pull me up the difficult bits—enter Jolyon!

But why were we doing this? Adventure, independence, physical satisfaction, comradeship—as well as to see one of the most beautiful wilderness areas in the world. This was worth the aches and pains, blisters, risk of dangerous falls, cold and fatigue. So at what age should one stop walking? My answer is—not yet!

Our basic plans were simple. We would meet at the Hobart airport on Friday 28 January and be driven to the Farmhouse Creek track by lunchtime. We would then walk to the South Cracroft River. Thereafter the daily stops would be Cutting Camp, Béchervaise Plateau, Thwaites Plateau, Goon Moor, Pass Creek, Cracroft Crossing, and hence to the Scotts Peak Dam to be picked up on Saturday 5 February. This gave us one spare day in case the weather should be less than perfect.

The week before we left was filled with extra chores, little time for adequate exercise, concerns about the weather and numerous other matters. However, finally we were off and after lunch at Farmhouse Creek we started a delightful walk, in dappled sunlight, up the valley. We followed Chapman's directions and arrived at the saddle and then proceeded down the other side following some very fresh blazes on trees. The track was surprisingly poor but after two hours we suddenly dropped down to water—however, it was scarcely a river and it was flowing in the wrong direction! A quick

look around made us realise that we were at Judds Cavern. The creek flowed out of the entrance to the cavern but we did not explore further as we suspected that it was a sacred Aboriginal site. A magnificent campsite was nearby but many dead trunks leaned precariously over it—fortunately none fell



*This photo of Jenny was taken moments before the party turned back on the Southern Traverse and ascended Federation (not pictured). The Devils Thumb and Thwaites Plateau are in the background.*  
Rosie Johnson

were there others? Perhaps a proper workout in a gym was advisable but I hate indoor gyms as much as I dislike squash in comparison with outdoor tennis. The secret weapon I used in my preparation was a rather unusual exercise—walking up hills backwards—it really does things for one's knees. But my wife found it embarrassing if a car passed us on the road.

We felt it was safer to have four walkers in such rugged terrain, so we invited a strap-

## Federation Peak area





during the night. The next day we scouted around for the old track which would take us to the Cracroft River; it could not be found. So we walked back up to the saddle. We were four hours behind schedule. The track down to the Cracroft River was through a beech forest. Some of the fallen timber

trouble if they were carrying our packs. After five hours of climbing, which included two pack-hauling sections, and after consuming mountains of scroggin, we arrived at Upper Béchervaise Plateau.

There was time to pitch our tents and then climb upwards to explore the route

proceeded onwards for another half-hour. Suddenly the cloud lifted. The sun came out and we could see the peak. We dropped our packs and hastened back.

The Direct Ascent consists of short but very steep sections with two very dangerous spots. Cairns are well placed along the whole route. Ropes are not necessary but climbing skills are essential. Fortunately, my three young companions all had experience at rockclimbing so they were able to guide my trembling hands and feet to the appropriate holds over the smooth sections. I looked down once—it was terrifying. In cold, wet weather the climb would be far too dangerous—a slip would result in a fall of 600 metres. I was comforted to know that 'only' three people had died on this section.

The last part of the climb was a rocky scramble and then we were at the top—with stupendous views over Lake Pedder,



*Federation Peak is the impressive finale of the rugged Eastern Arthur Range. Doug was enjoying himself so much by the time this photograph was taken that he dragged Jol and his daughters on an unnecessary side-trip up into the Western Arthurs for more views. Despite the party's whining, it was worth every bit of the extra effort. Jenny Johnson*

across the track had been chain-sawed by a kindly track worker but he or she had given up well before reaching the river. On the other side of the river are open button-grass plains where we obtained the first magnificent views of Federation Peak. Cutting Camp is set in a beautiful paper-bark forest and is an ideal camp-site beside a creek though it was a long day getting there.

Nothing could have prepared us for the climb up Moss Ridge. Wearing a weighted pack before the trip had toughened up the shoulders but climbing over and under logs and squeezing one's pack between closely spaced tree-trunks while rising rapidly 600 metres was not fun. Chapman likens this part of the walk to a gymnastic course. We felt that Olympic gymnasts would have

we would take the next day. We found Geeves Gully and were appalled at its steepness—almost a vertical drop down to Lake Geeves. We looked around for an easier route; there was none. Cold, damp mist hung all around. Our enthusiasm was dampened—this was dangerous country. We retreated to our tents and worried about what would befall us the next day.

In light rain and with low mist around us, we climbed up above the plateau and then very carefully negotiated the climb down a steep chimney slot, across Geeves Gully to the chockstone on the Southern Traverse. When we reached the cairns leading to the Direct Ascent, cloud was still all around us and we were very cold so we stopped for lunch. As the weather did not improve, we

**'Many people were consulted about the feasibility and practicality of getting a 61-year-old to Federation and back without firing off our EPIRB.'**

the distant Southern Ocean and all the surrounding peaks. The logbook was duly signed. It was 31 January and 50 walkers had reached the summit since New Year's Day. Then a slow, very careful descent took place. We picked up our packs and were so elated that we missed the turn-off to Thwaites Plateau and instead found ourselves at Hanging Lake—a superb camp-site with three platforms for tents and a constructed loo which must surely have the most magnificent views for a loo in Australia.

The trip was far from over—it was still hard work getting to Goon Moor on the following day. However, we had lots of magnificent views looking back to Federation Peak. It is certainly the most impressive peak in the area, standing out like the central tower of Durham Cathedral in the UK. At Goon Moor is a secluded camp-site on boards. Dinner was served sitting on a rugged outcrop above the camp as the sun set. The view was unforgettable.

The next day it was a long scramble to get around to Stuart Saddle. Then followed

the long descent of 800 metres down Luckmans Lead to Pass Creek. It was a hot day. Our feet were painfully jammed into the tops of our boots and our knees were creaking by the time we reached Pass Creek for a late lunch. The flies were so appalling that we crazily decided to climb up Lucifer Ridge to camp at Lake Rosanne. This was a long haul on a very hot day and I became quite short of breath. The views back to the Eastern Arthurs were fantastic. We finally dropped down to the lake, which has its own little quartz beach with superb swimming. We declared the next day our day off so we simply walked without packs around the Crags of Andromeda to the West Portal where we enjoyed the spectacular views across Glovers Pass to Luckmans Lead and Federation Peak to the east and the whole length of the Western Arthurs to the west. The later afternoon was spent sitting in Lake Rosanne on white quartz boulders playing five hundred, thus escaping most of the flies.

The hike ended with a long descent to Cracroft Crossing and then the longer walk along the Arthur Plains Track to Two Mile Creek where we spent our last night. After hot weather for three days, rain started overnight and fell heavily the next morning as we walked to Junction Creek and then up Mackays Track to Scotts Peak Dam. We arrived at our pick-up point without any food left at all, enough tea for one final cup and four squares of toilet paper. The girls had catered well.

On the entire walk we met only 11 other walkers and three rangers. One of the rangers commented how few walkers there had been so far that summer. There was no evidence of environmental damage and only one sweet paper was picked up on the whole route. More duckboards are being laid. Timber for tent decking had been dumped at Béchervaise Plateau. We were most impressed with the three toilets which had been constructed.

We were constantly amazed that this most rugged and beautiful part of Tasmania had ever been explored on foot and that such good tracks had eventually been made. Even with the best of modern walking gear and lightweight, nutritious food we still found the trip very arduous. Our respect for these early walkers remains immense. For people in sedentary occupations like ours, prolonged fitness preparation certainly pays off. But the success of our trip was undoubtedly due more to the good weather than to our adequate preparation. Perhaps my good fortune will encourage other 61-year-old obstetricians to go to Federation Peak with their rockclimbing daughters. 🐾

*Doug Johnson is a specialist obstetrician working on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. He has walked off and on since his first walk to Lake Tall Kang, in the Victorian Alps, in 1954. His three children have all been dragged along at various times and now claim to love it, too.*

# A Very Foolish

Jolyon Blazey saves his reputation by making the hairy ascer

**'SO WHAT DOES THE GUIDEBOOK CALL THIS?'**

'Steep.'

'Not very steep?'

'No, just steep.'

'Right, okay.'

I had a full pack on. My index finger and thumb were holding on to the end of a damp twig that felt loose. My left foot was buried in a blob of spongy peat that was connected

wards up hills, 70 kilometres away in Moorooduc.

The walk to and from Federation Peak began with thick and gloomy Antarctic beech forest which always reminds me of children's fairy tales. It would not have been incongruous for a green troll to crawl out from a hollow log with a three-pronged spear and shout 'Halt!' But, instead, we waded through



*Squeaky clean at our starting-point, Farmhouse Creek. Doug (left), Jol (the 'strapping Adonis') and sisters Rosie and Jenny. Richard Kjar*

to other, similar blobs that together formed a precarious staircase up the rock-face on our way to Federation Peak. To look down was unwise. Deep, methodic breathing was a very good idea and, when coupled with very calculated and slow body moves, I thought I might just make it. Believe me, if I hadn't trained for this I wouldn't have made it.

★

I began to train about a month before. Up at five in my dimly lit room, the 20 litre water container sloshed gently as I eased it into the pack. I was puffing from its weight by that stage. The dog was waiting at the door. We exited into the suburban darkness and headed for the beach. A strong wind was blowing plumes of sand into the air, which would be kind of exciting and romantic if we weren't in Brighton, Melbourne. On the way back two middle-aged power walkers grabbed their poodles and fled. I must have looked strange in full council-worker uniform and with a heavy, sloshing pack, but that's okay because I knew that my bushwalking partner Doug was walking back-

ward (admittedly, shallow for Tassie), stumbled over the hollow log and on to the wrong track. We ended up at a dark and cold camp-site next to an astonishing limestone cave with a five metre ceiling and a small river flowing straight out of the mouth. We found out later that the cave was an Aboriginal sacred site; I'm glad that we had the good sense not to explore.

We walked out from the cave site and rejoined the main track; our wrong turn was so obvious that we must have been in a daze to follow it. Here we met two (other) strapping Adonises having a cigarette in the trees. We all scoffed at this, being the healthy-livin' individuals that we are; but we were soon passed by them, and they passed us every other day as well (after finishing their morning fog). We emerged into very exposed button-grass heath land and experienced rain, wind and the famous Peter Dombrovskis view of the Eastern Arthurs including the peak itself.

We met the Cracroft River (hard both to pronounce and to walk along) and had to

# Undertaking

## Federation Peak

negotiate a mess of slippery fallen trunks and razor grass. A full block of rum 'n' raisin dark chocolate was required for this section. After auditing our food we realised that we had shopped for speed, not satisfaction, and Vita-wheats were rationed to four a person each day. After eight days I was amazed that I hadn't lost much weight. I realised that we must eat about twice as much food as we need in this crazy, post-humanist society in which we live.

Moss Ridge was a nightmare of third-day weariness, more slippery fallen logs and bushwalking-yoga to squeeze through those awkward tight spots. The guidebook labelled this section as 'steep, with some very steep sections that may require pack-hauling'. You've just gotta love that Australian tradition of understatement. And pack-hauling? Climb up first without the pack, then drag the packs up by rope denuding the slope of any remaining vegetation

*'Even the understated guidebook began to emit words such as "very steep", "extreme care", and "tremendous exposure".'*

and loose rock. Believe me, it is safer to go first in these operations.

By now we were in a sort of montane woodland and things had cooled off considerably. We climbed higher on to Béchervaise Plateau, which was a patchwork of stunted pandanus, rocky outcrops and a fine carpet of alpine grasses and herbs. The ground was more like spongy peat than solid but we were used to that by now and it definitely made for good sleeping. The view from the plateau showed nearly all the ground we had covered. I strolled over to the edge of the plateau at dusk and just stood there in the freezing-cold air gazing down into the valley.

Polypropylene thermal garments unleash a whole new experience in body odour. We're talking old socks with fruity notes of sweet-and-sour pork to borrow a term from

wine-tasting. The aroma begins to mature after the fourth day of powdered chicken cacciatore and rice. But where would I be without thermals? I recall a conversation with fellow walker Jenny as we were organising the trip. I said, 'Yeah, I'll be taking a pair of Levis, a few T-shirts and a council bluey. What are you guys taking?'

'Oh, right. Well, we're taking lots of thermals, some quick-dry tops and Gore-Tex coats and overpants. Jol, perhaps you should consider taking thermals, maybe?'

those large, radiant ripples was the beginning of vertigo. Geeves, wasn't he a butler? Memories of Tin Tin and childhood began unfolding.

'Geeves, what do you make of all this?' 'If I may be so bold, sir, very foolish.'

Even the understated guidebook began to emit words such as 'very steep', 'extreme care', and 'tremendous exposure'. Everything was making me nervous. Rosie was our champion climber and she went first. I will never forget her small, nimble fingers turning white with cold on the rock.

I'll confess that my original intention was not to climb the peak but a few things happened along the way that changed my mind. First, the horrific Southern Traverse—which I have just described—was the only way through the Eastern Arthurs and after we were through, I knew that the peak could not be much worse. And, secondly, Doug was the only other male in the group and at 61 years of age he clambered up the summit track like a mountain goat. My reputation was at stake.

So I simply swallowed any visions I had of rag-doll figures cartwheeling down the precipice and made sure that I was breathing deeply. There wasn't a problem with concentration; we were all completely wired on adrenalin. Think several Turkish coffees in a row. There are about five vertical sections with adequate holds; without climbing experience these would have been very tough for Doug, but he didn't show any sign of wavering. Not all the rock was secure. I gave everything a friendly tap with my knuckles to check for that hollow sound.

We made it up there—and back, which was harder—and then engaged in communal back slapping and post-mortems for the next two days. The adrenalin didn't wear off for at least that long. I didn't really

notice the view from the summit but Doug assures me that it was really amazing. I almost wanted to go back straight away and do it again, but that was the adrenalin talking, not I. ☺

*Jolyon Blazey is a computer programmer/botanist who is based in Melbourne. He has walked and cross-country skied extensively through the Victorian Alps and has spent some time in the Sierra Nevada in California.*

The best maps to use for this walk are the *Old River* and *Huon* 1:100 000 Tasmap sheets. See *Wild* nos 73, 61, 52 and 43 for other articles on Federation Peak.



*High on success, Jol does a celebratory handstand in front of Federation. Doug Johnson*

Don't worry, I can take a hint, especially from a seasoned, multiskilled adventurer like Jenny. I was in disposals the next day, a formidable stack of thermals and a Visa card on the counter. Body odour or not, warmth is the key.

From here on in my notes turn into a combination of sappy declarations of love to my family and friends, and amendments to my will. One look down Geeves Gully and the lake below is enough to turn even a strapping Adonis into butter. When I saw the lake I began to hallucinate; looking at







TREKKING IN NEPAL

# *Footloose in the Himalayan 'Foothills'*

Gloria Keil chuckles her way to Annapurna Base Camp on a classic tea-house trek





SOME TIME AGO MY HUSBAND SAID, 'I THINK we should go trekking in Nepal again before we get too decrepit'.

As we were on the brink of 66 and 63, respectively, I thought that we were already too decrepit and said so but he replied, 'Non-sense, piece of cake', and sent off for visas. 'We'll go somewhere new, like the Annapurna Sanctuary, and then to Muktinath again.'

He assured me that things were different and easier since we had been there 20 years ago. Trekkers were now catered for along all

cided to go to Muktinath in the dry season it will also entail walking along a wide and rocky riverbed into a head wind full of gritty sand; judging when, where and how to cross the various strands of the rapidly flowing river without getting freezingly wet and when to take to the tracks that snake up the mountainsides to avoid the uncrossable bits. From these mountain tracks—some of them very high indeed to get past gigantic landslides that have dumped the previous track into the river—you can look down and watch miniature donkey trains and loaded yaks winding their way steadily along the riverbed, the tinkling of their bells rising faintly to the heights.

Early winter is a marvellous time for trekking in Nepal. The air is brisk and clear, the skies are blue, the surrounding peaks are

a German girl carrying a large pack. She didn't feel well and sat down and cried a couple of times. She had no idea it would be like this, she said. This was her first day trekking and she didn't know how much longer she could go on. She went walking every holiday but not like this and how much further was it to the top? About two hours, poor girl. Her big, strong partner was way ahead (with mine) waiting for her, admiring the view, full of energy and enthusiasm. I told her how awful I'd found my first three days of trekking 20 years ago, how I would have gone back by helicopter if I'd known how to contact one, how my muscles had cramped and my knees turned to jelly and how I, too, had cried. I told her how it had improved after that and how I'd enjoyed the rest of it but I don't think



**Above, the promise of a cold one (or two) at this lodge was sadly not fulfilled. Lodging signs are friendly and inviting but they're not always 100 per cent reliable—especially if they concern beer or hot showers! All uncredited photos Grant Dixon**

the most popular routes. We wouldn't have to go with a group and a string of porters, cooks and guides and sleep in tents in the snow. We could go by ourselves, walk at our own pace, stop wherever we liked and eat and sleep in comfortable lodges where they would put a fire pot of glowing coals under the blanket skirts of the communal table to keep us warm when the sun went down. We could have short, lazy days if we got tired of walking. We could hire a porter so that we wouldn't have to carry much. And some places even had electricity now. What more could we want?

'Are the mountains less steep than they used to be?' I wanted to ask, but decided not to be a wet blanket. Trekking in Nepal takes place 'in the foothills of the Himalayas' as the brochures say. The foothills might be hill like when compared with Mt Everest and other Himalayan peaks but they're mountains all right.

Trekking in Nepal, with or without a pack, entails climbing steeply for four or five hours (give or take an hour or two) to a village on a mountain top, climbing steeply down the other side, crossing a river—usually but not always with the help of a bridge of sorts—climbing steeply up to the next village on a mountain top and so on until you get to wherever it is you've decided to go. If you've de-

**'At the top of the next steep climb was a one-table, four-chair, outdoor restaurant and a tiny shop window with a chocolate cake on display and a sign that said, "EAT DESSERT NOW—LIFE IS SO UNCERTAIN".'**

covered in snow and the sun shines all day long. Occasional clouds or valleys of mist only enhance the splendour. Of course, it's cold in the shade in the daytime and very cold at night but that's what thermal underwear and down jackets are for. And if you can't wash as the water doesn't run because the streams are frozen, you cares? You can wash later if you feel like it when the sun is shining and the ice has melted.

The air over Kathmandu, unfortunately, was neither brisk nor clear when we arrived from Bangkok and the sky was a smoggy grey. We instantly decided to trek first and sightsee in Kathmandu later. The domestic terminal was only a few minutes' walk away and having convinced a small crowd of enthusiasts that we did not require transport, a guide or porters to get there, we went in procession with the sceptics and the optimists and enquired about flights to Pokhara. Within the hour we were in a small plane with 16 empty folding seats and two other passengers, being offered cotton wool to stuff in our ears and barley sugar to suck. A 40-minute, scenic flight later we were in Pokhara. An indulgence, flying like that, but we were in a hurry to get our trekking permits and be on our way. I assure you that at the end of the trek we travelled soberly and cheaply back from Pokhara to Kathmandu by bus in seven hours for \$4.50.

In Pokhara, alas, we couldn't get our trekking permits in a hurry because it was too late when we arrived and the next day was Saturday and a holiday. We hired bicycles while we waited and rattled round the lakeside to the foot of the nearest mountain with a village on top. We thought that we should get a bit of practice before starting the trek proper. About halfway up I climbed for a while with

she was listening by then. I was honestly trying to cheer her up. I don't know how far they went or how she felt at the end of her day but I felt fine at the end of mine.

We queued for our trekking permits on Sunday, engaged a porter (brother of the cook at the hotel at which we were staying), hired a taxi for six o'clock on Monday (taxi-driver—the cook's cousin!) and were ready. The next morning, after an hour's mountain drive to New Bridge (about \$12), we left the taxi, crossed a footbridge over a river to roadless Birehanti and started to walk towards the Annapurna Sanctuary—steeply upwards, of course.

**Right, Nepali children watch the world (and lots of sweaty trekkers) go by at Pisang, Manang Valley, Annapurna region.**

**Pages 32 and 33, part of the charm of Nepal is walking along tracks which have been the local communication and freight routes for centuries. The supplies of the local people and the staples and luxuries expected by Western trekkers reach their destination on the backs of myriad teams of porters. Snapshots, colourful scenes of local industry. John Chapman**



On the second night of our trek we met a middle-aged, long-haired, long-bearded Englishman with one leg. The other had been removed at the hip three years ago. Where were we going, he wanted to know. Ah, the ABC, he said rather wistfully; he wished he could go there, too. ABC stands for Annapurna Base Camp, which is in the Annapurna Sanctuary and is 4130 metres above sea level. At this altitude the air is thin and it is not unusual for walkers nearing the Base Camp to pause and pant between each slow-motion step. It's the

last stop for mountaineers before they set off to climb the surrounding peaks of the Annapurna Range.

It had always been his dream to trek in Nepal said the one-legged man. I admired his nimbleness with one leg and two sticks but couldn't bear to think of him making his way up and down all those uneven and awkwardly steep steps. He was accompanied by a cheerful guide who had greying hair and a steel-ribbed back support and was doubling as a porter.

I forgot about the one-legged man for the next three weeks but we met him again when our trek was over and we were back in Pokhara. I was proud of getting to the Base Camp with my 63 years but, yes, he'd got there too with his one leg. It had taken him twice as long and worn him out but he'd got there. His guide looked fit and well and as cheerful as ever.

'Did you enjoy yourself?' people asked me when I got back to Australia. Of course I enjoyed myself. Labouring up steep steps in the sun hour after hour was not always enjoyable but getting to the top of each mountain—sorry, foothill—with magnificent views and a downhill stretch to look forward to certainly was.

Eating was enjoyable, too. We usually walked for an hour or two before breakfast. Then we'd stop at some two-bench, open-air restaurant hanging out over a magical valley and sit with the early-morning sun warming our backs and decide whether to have 'Punched' or Scrambled Eggs or perhaps a 'Cheese Omelette'. We'd wonder if they had 'Bread Rools' at this time of the morning. Perhaps I'd have Oat's Porridge with milk again. Once when I'd asked for porridge with milk, a brown little daughter of the house had hopped down the terraced hillside with her baby sister on her back and milked the family buffalo into her dish. Milk for my porridge. She'd beamed up at me as she came hopping back up the hill with it. Her perfect teeth were as white as buffalo milk. Of course I enjoyed myself.

I enjoyed having a hot shower. Every 'Fooding and Lodging' place offered 'Hot Showers Here' or 'Real Hot Showers Here' or 'Solar Heater Very Hot Showers' or 'Really Hot Running Water 24 Hours a Day'. They all had solar panels so it could have been true. For my first hot shower I took my clothes off in the draughty, cement-floored, outside cubicle with its glassless window and mountain view and turned on the hot water. Nothing. Philosophically, as I was already undressed, I decided to wash in cold water. Shrieking under my breath, I soaped myself with water from the cold water tap. It dribbled to nothing before I could rinse the soap off. For my second hot shower I checked with the lodge keeper first. 'Hot shower?' I asked. 'Yes, yes.' Beaming smile, perfect teeth. 'Solar heating. Hot shower.'

In the draughty, cement-floored etc, etc I took off my clothes, turned on the hot shower and, bingo, warm water. 'I'll shampoo my hair while I wait for it to get hot', I thought happily. The warm water lasted till my head was a meringue and then turned icy cold. There weren't any other trekkers in the lodge

## Annapurna Sanctuary

Facts to go, by John Chapman

The Annapurna Range is about 200 kilometres north-west of Kathmandu. The nearest major town is Pokhara, which is Nepal's second-largest city. Regular plane and bus services operate daily from Kathmandu to Pokhara.

The big attraction of this region of Nepal is that this is where the foothills of the Himalayas are both narrowest and lowest. Accordingly, there are many excellent views of the high mountains and they start immediately. No walking here for five days before seeing any mountains.

Various trekking locations are available around the Annapurnas. Even short treks of three or four days are worth while. Allow 11 to 12 days for the return trek into Annapurna Sanctuary. Another popular trek is a return trip through the huge Kali Gandaki valley to Jomsom and Mukti; allow about seven days each way or return by aeroplane from Jomsom. The big trip of the area is the circuit of the entire Annapurna Range. This requires 18 days of walking and should be done in an anticlockwise direction. Due to snow, the circuit is normally closed during winter.

### What is trekking?

This is not bushwalking. Trekking in Nepal is walking through the hills following local tracks and absorbing the culture of the villages. For many, the major attraction is the fantastic views of the Himalayan mountains but most also appreciate the simpler life of the Nepali people.

### Types of trekking

Do not come here carrying your own pack with tent and self-contained food supply. Westerners are regarded as being rich (by Nepalese standards all westerners are rich) and are expected to contribute to the local economy.

The most common trekking method for individuals is to use the 'tea-house' system. These shelters are probably better described as lodges or cheap hotels and provide meals and accommodation. Advantages are that they are cheap (up to \$A20 a day) and you can be flexible and not have an itinerary. Disadvantages are that you are limited to the popular trekking areas or trade routes where lodges are.

At the other extreme is the organised trekking group which carries tents, cooking equipment and most food; you sleep in tents and Sherpas prepare all meals. You only need to carry a day pack. This trek style still contributes to the local economy by employing local

people and by the purchase of fresh food. There are also several styles of trek in between the two extremes.

### When to go

The most popular seasons are autumn (October and November) and spring (March and April). These have the best weather and the high passes are usually open. My favourite season is winter (December to February) as the dry winter weather offers excellent views of the high peaks.

### Safety

Recommended immunisations for visiting Nepal are for typhoid, tetanus, polio, Meningococcal meningitis and hepatitis A and B. Drink only treated or well-boiled water and eat only freshly cooked food. Tap water is never safe to drink or to use for brushing teeth.

The Nepalese people often go to great lengths to satisfy Western tastes in food. However, it is best to avoid salads, peeled fruit, milk, chhang (local beer) and food such as pies that have been cooked earlier.

Annapurna Sanctuary is the only major trekking route in Nepal that has a significant avalanche danger. Trekkers have been killed—take advice from local villagers as to how safe the route through the entrance gorge to the sanctuary is. Another problem in the Annapurna region is the stealing of cameras and other expensive gear. Carefully watch all valuables.

### Maps and guidebooks

The best-known guide is *Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya* by Stan Armitage. Published by Lonely Planet, it's available worldwide. In Nepal there are several maps, all with very rough contours (1000 metres) and showing only major tracks. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project map or the Mandala trekking maps are as good as any. Due to avalanches and floods, tracks regularly change so place more faith in the villagers than the maps.

### Permits

Visas are required and can be obtained on arrival. Costs start from \$US30 for 60 days. For the Annapurna region, trekking permits are no longer required but a fee of 2000 rupees (about \$A50) must be paid in Pokhara. This is for entry into the Annapurna Conservation Area.

Bushwalking writer John Chapman has been contributing to *Wild* since issue one. His favourite place is still Tasmania although he regularly visits all other Australian States.

*Nilgiri peak rears up through the clouds above a monastery in the Kali Gandaki valley. At just over 7000 metres, this peak is small fry compared with the summits of Annapurna which rise beyond.*





to blame for using all the hot water. I suppose the family had used it. Who'd wash clothes, dishes or themselves in cold water if hot were available?

I grew cunning. I would ask the lodge keeper, 'Hot water?' 'Yes, yes,' he'd say but nevertheless I would turn on the tap before I took my clothes off. Sometimes, when hot water didn't come, I would tell the lodge keeper, 'No hot water.' Concern. 'Ah, hot water used up. Tank empty.' Or, 'Ah, water frozen up mountain. Sorry.' They would always heat you a bucket of water over the kitchen fire if you really wanted to wash.

I stopped caring after a while. I had an aluminium bottle filled with boiling water every night to put at the bottom of my sleeping-bag and with this boiled, still body-warm bottle of water we could clean our teeth and wash our smelly bits the next morning. Three times *en route* there was hot water in the shower. One unexpected hot shower a week is 20 times more enjoyable than a predictable hot shower every day.

The Nepalese are hardy people. All the fuss trekkers make about hot water must have caused them endless amusement over the years. The villagers wash themselves, their babies, their clothes and their pots and dishes in cold water, often at 6 am and usually outside in the chilly air at public washing places. Only bad-mannered trekkers stare.

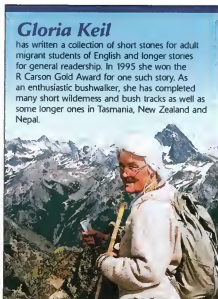
The tracks the trekkers use are those the Nepalese use. Children skip past on their way to school—two or more hours away for some—traders go past with their strings of loaded animals; and buffaloes, cows, yaks and dogs treat you courteously as you edge past them in narrow places. Flocks of sheep and goats flow past you as you flatten yourself to one side of the track or smoothly around you if you don't. Medics pass with big cool-boxes of vaccine on their backs. Teachers pass, sometimes slowing to walk beside you for a while to talk in careful English. Women pass, bent under baskets of firewood or animal fodder or rocks for building, or with nothing more on their backs than a sleeping baby in a shawl. Porters pass, with anything that local businesses, individuals or trekking groups have hired them to carry. And, in between, chickens roost fatly in the sun beside the track as though nothing would ever make them move.

Of all the material that travelled along those mountain tracks on the backs of men, I don't think I'll ever forget the hollow, metal telegraph poles cut into carrying sections, any one of which would have been impossible for me to lift off the ground at all. Or the three enormous, hessian-wrapped bales of wool that jogged one behind the other through a crowded market-place, leaning like tired, angular giants from another world. Or the three-to-four metre long building timbers. Old men carried one each. Young men carried three. The top beam was always shorter, either for balance or because there was a recognised limit to how much weight even the youngest and strongest could carry.

Our porter—who left an hour or two after us each morning and sometimes passed us during the day—carried about 20 kilos. I felt sorry for him, too, but by comparison with

the carriers of building material his load was light, working conditions excellent and pay generous. [See info on page 16.] He carried our 20 kilos and a light rucksack for himself. In it he kept his gloves and woolly cap when he wasn't wearing them and a pair of track pants to put on while he was washing everything else and waiting for it to dry. I am pleased to say that when we had to cross a shallow but wide and rushing river over ice-covered rocks and our porter got his feet wet, I had a spare pair of socks to give him.

We stood and watched for quite a while at that particular crossing. Oncoming porters either hurried from rock to rock trusting to speed and luck to arrive more or less dry on



the other side, or they slipped off rocks and splashed on through the water, shoes and all, or they took their shoes off before they crossed and coiled their bare feet cautiously around the slippery rocks in the icy water to cross safely. Only one porter fell. His heavy load lay in the water while his arms and legs beated vainly as he tried to right himself. The river poured over him until the next porter reached him and heaved him carefully upright. We took our unencumbered selves across eventually. We kept our solid, well-ridged hiker's boots on, tested every step with our sticks and went across like animated snails. It was quite exciting, and such a good feeling once we were over. When we watched from the other side as more people crossed it looked easier, of course. A proper suspension bridge spans the river a short way along from where we crossed but the track up to it had been part of a recent landslide. A new track will be there by now.

At the top of the next steep climb was a one-table, four-chair, outdoor restaurant and a tiny shop window with a chocolate cake on display and a sign that said, 'EAT DESSERT NOW—LIFE IS SO UNCERTAIN'. I was tempted to believe that the sign was related to the river crossing below but I don't suppose it was.

At a New Year's Eve party a week after our return, I was asked what was most memorable about the trip. Without thinking I answered,

'The spelling on the menus'. I would like to take that back. I loved the spelling on the menus but would describe it merely as 'memorable'. Who could resist Milstrony Soup, Lazanla, Spaghti, Vegetable Culetts, Scrumble Eggs, Chinese Chopsey, Egg Noodle Soup, Buff Chilly or Kantiki Fried Chicken with Apple Fitters or Filtders for dessert—or even Rice Puding—eaten in the Dinning Room, of course.

'Most memorable' better describes the heart-stopping, mountain-brushing flight from Jomsom to Pokhara at the end of the trek. The plane took 20 passengers and was full. While the foreigners craned their necks to all sides to stare, gasp and exclaim, the Nepalese were calm. My neighbour across the aisle, however, kept her eyes tightly closed, her head down and a grip on the seat in front that kept her brown knuckles white for the entire trip. I wondered whether she knew something that we didn't or merely had a more vivid imagination. Our porter identified mountains for us, pointed out tracks we'd walked along, villages in which we'd spent a night and valleys we'd crossed. Days of walking disappeared behind us in minutes.

At Pokhara airport they no longer sound a siren to warn people and their animals off the runway when a plane is about to land. A lot has changed in 20 years.

Despite thousands of foreigners trekking through their villages, the Nepalese remain friendly. 'Namaste', they say in greeting or response as you pass them on the track. Twenty years ago the children would hover round with their hands out and say, 'Namaste, metal (sweets)? or 'Namaste, school pen?' but very few do it now. The Nepalese government decided that tooth decay, begging and pestering tourists were undesirable and discouraged all three by asking tourists not to give. Some tourists can't resist so some children still ask—but not if their parents can see them.

Towards the end of our trip we passed a teenager with a sense of humour. I think he must have been a very persistent beggar for sweets and school pens when he was younger.

'Namaste', we said as we manoeuvred past him and his donkey. 'Namastebuggeroff', he replied, smiling, and when we looked at him, startled, he slapped his donkey and laughed and shrugged as if to say, 'I couldn't resist it'.

I think that's how my husband feels about Nepal. He has managed to go there several times since we were first there together 20 years ago. He can't resist it.

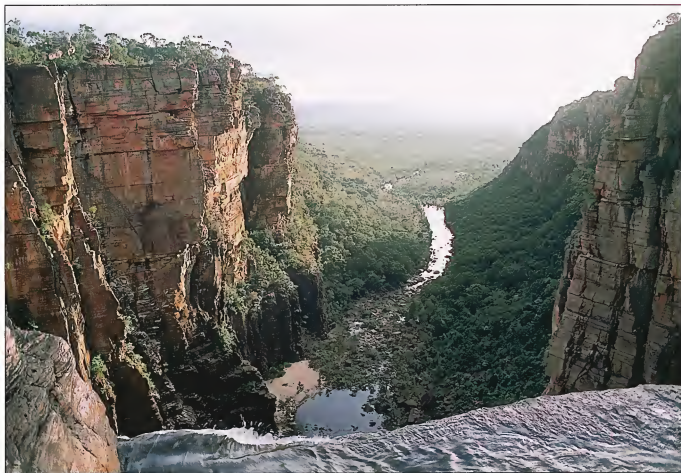
For the safety of trekkers there are police checkpoints along the routes where you record your details. Sometimes we'd look down the columns to see how many had passed that day, where they'd come from and how old they were. They were mostly a lot younger than we but some were older and we found one who was seventy-one. My husband's eyes gleamed when he saw this.

I enjoyed my trekking experience. It was good to find that I could still do what I did 20 years ago even if it took a bit longer each day to do it, but what will I say a couple of years from now when my husband says we should go trekking in Nepal again before we get too decrepit? 🐼



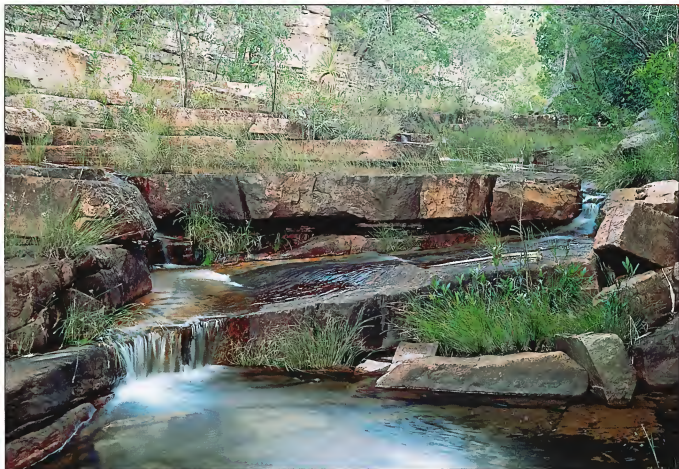
# Kakadu

*Andrew Cox discovers a world of rock, water and lushness*



*At the lip of Jim Jim Falls (Barrkmalam). The plunge pool far below leads to the broad South Alligator River flood plain.*





**Above**, a terraced cascade feeding into the flood plain. **Left**, Jim Jim Falls drops 170 metres from the Arnhem Land Plateau into a plunge pool. The photo was taken at the end of the wet season. By September, Jim Jim Creek is a mere trickle of water again.



Andrew Cox has been a keen photographer of Australian natural landscapes for 15 years, and has been a special adviser to *Wild* since 1993. As the Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of New South Wales he attempts to influence the permanent protection of the areas he photographs and, in particular, the few remaining woodlands of central west NSW.

# Exploring Jim Barrett

## Sandy Holmes introduces this humble Blue Mountains pioneer and historian

**JIM BARRETT HAS WRITTEN NINE BOOKS** and countless articles relating to exploration, bushwalking and the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. His perspective comes from his vast experience bushwalking in the 1940s and 1950s. The time I spent reading Barrett's books and talking with him gave me an insight into the development of the bushwalking movement as well as a wealth of information about the early days of the Blue Mountains.

Born in 1923, Barrett grew up in Sydney in the Depression and was fortunate to stay at school until he was fourteen. He completed the Intermediate Certificate with the assistance of three bursaries acknowledging his abilities. By the age of 15 he was working and studying law by night, but the outbreak of war put an end to his dream of becoming a lawyer. When he was demobilised from the Australian Imperial Force at 23 he was at a loss: like many other veterans he found himself bushwalking, and so discovered a passion that would eventually lead to the writing of his books. Barrett began his adventuring with the Catholic Bushwalking Club (CBC), and through the club met his wife, Pat.

The Catholic bushwalkers of 1947 had their own particular challenges. Their peers included the Sydney Bush Walkers, the Coast and Mountain Walkers (see profile in *Wild* no 66), and the Warriags who were undertaking adventurous weekend walks in the Blue Mountains. In order to take part in these longer walks members of the CBC had to complete them in one day, to be back for their Mass obligation on Sunday mornings. Barrett recalled doing Jenolan to Katoomba in a day. Through walks like this the Catholic bushwalkers inadvertently set a standard in high-speed bushwalking.

There was occasional respite from this pressure to return for Mass. In 1940 five priests with a penchant for bushwalking built a chapel and a shack on Scotts Main Range, on the New Years bend of the Kowmung River. One of these priests was Pat's uncle. In 1943 a meeting of the priests and the CBC widened the club's bushwalking opportunities. The priests enabled the bushwalkers to organise overnight stops at the

Shack and hear Mass in the Ironbark Chapel before continuing. The Shack became the heart of the Catholic bushwalking movement, a place where generations of Catholic bushwalkers have congregated and camped, where unknown bushwalkers have sheltered from the elements, where the annual CBC marathon still culminates. The first marathon took place in 1953 and was won by Barrett and Hugh Smith.



*A portrait of Jim Barrett, taken in 1955. Jim Barrett collection*

Barrett describes how in those days he would sit for hours reading maps and contemplating routes. Useful maps were difficult to find or simply non-existent. Contoured military maps, one inch to the mile, were often inaccurate and mainly limited to the main mountain ridge. Nevertheless Barrett had knowledge of and access to them and they proved useful where little else was available. As he said, 'it did test you, and it did force a navigational knowledge'. For the southern Blue Mountains there weren't any contour maps and Barrett relied on Myles Dunphy's *Map of the Blue Mountains and Burragorang Valley*. It showed the Burragorang as it was before Warragamba Dam was built, the old roads, farms and churches of the valley, and was an invaluable resource for the writing of Barrett's books. Pat showed

me the map, half a century old, reinforced with flour-and-water glue. It still looks good.

Barrett stresses that much of the true exploration was really done by bushwalkers. He describes the explorations of Gregory Blaxland, Francis Barrallier and Thomas Mitchell's surveyors as just a few tenuous lines across the Blue Mountains map. The explorers were followed by settlers, who developed little pockets of farming communities. Barrett largely credits the bushwalkers with opening up the areas in between. 'Myles Dunphy and Herb Gallop explored the upper Kowmung and many other remote corners of the southern Blue Mountains. Over many years Myles mapped these previously unknown areas. In the Blue Labyrinth it was Harry White and Jack Gibson who explored and mapped the area. The rest of the map was filled in by bushwalkers.' Barrett explains that in the 1940s and 1950s bushwalkers were taking up the threads of those pioneering walkers, a continuing expansion of what Dunphy had started.

In the 1950s advanced bushwalkers were naturally developing an interest in canyoning and rockclimbing. 'We had basic raw skills just from walking', said Barrett. 'You'd come to a rock face and do the best you could.' He joined the Sydney Rockclimbing Club, taking training in Glenbrook Gorge and at Narrow Neck. Nylon ropes were unknown and initially inch-and-a-half Manila hemp rope (that's the circumference) was their only equipment. 'We were using the old classic method of abseiling which involved a rope coming down through your legs and over your shoulders, with you controlling the rope. The intelligent walkers got their mothers to pad their jackets with a thick wax because behind the shoulder was the main pressure point.' This primitive technique was responsible for many burns, and Barrett's shoulders still bear the scars.

Of these early climbing days, Barrett remembers a small group from the club who had two particular ambitions. One was to climb Tasmania's Federation Peak, first climbed in 1949 (see *Wild* no 73). The other was to go mountaineering in New Zealand. 'My most memorable day walking was on top of Federation Peak in 1954. The south-west of Tasmania is just magic! It's very difficult, well, it was then anyway. One day it took us all day to go two miles up Luckmans Lead on to the Eastern Arthurs.'





***'Barrett is a conservationist, an explorer, a gardener<sup>13</sup> and a lover of nature. He is also a writer, a researcher, an historian, a photographer, a music lover; an intellectual.'***

*'If you're planning a walk in the southern Blue Mountains, read what Barrett has to say about the history of the area.' Black Dog Rock in the Central Coffs River Basin, 1955. Burragarang Valley is in the background near the horizon. Barrett collection*

The following year Hugh Smith, Iver Pederson, Jack Murphy and Barrett fulfilled their ambition to go mountaineering in New Zealand. They had nylon rope and a better type of abseiling equipment. 'I spent two months climbing in the Mt Cook region which, for an Australian who didn't know snow and ice, was a marvellous experience. One of our members, Frank Cooper, had become a guide there and was very competent, a great natural climber. He had all the skills and we learned very quickly from him. We should have attended a six-month course, but my education lasted about two days down in Arthurs Pass and we all went together to the Mt Cook area.' Cooper and Murphy successfully pioneered many gruelling climbs including the first full double-traverse of the three peaks of Mt Cook. Cloud overtook them on their return from the High Peak, 500 feet [150 metres] from the nearest hut. Cooper fell and was killed, but Murphy made it to the hut and was eventually rescued. Later that year Murphy was teaching abseiling for the CBC in Glenbrook Gorge when the abseil point—a

tree—pulled out of the cliff and he was killed. A plaque was placed in Glenbrook Gorge to commemorate Jack Murphy.

Despite the difficulties, the 1950s were the heyday of the CBC. Barrett speaks fondly of the great friendships, arduous adventuring and magnificent landscapes that marked this time. The challenges never stopped. When Barrett first joined, a ban on mixed camping existed, a condition that resulted in the resignations of many club members. Eventually the ban was relaxed.

According to his wife, Barrett was so shy that it took him eight years to ask her out. He agrees that he was—and still is—'painfully shy'. Nevertheless, they eventually married in 1956 and started a large family. Their involvement in the CBC was gradually reduced to make time for the demands of family life although Barrett still wrote articles for the club magazine *The Waysider*. While bushwalking in Glenbrook they discovered the patch of land where they would build their house. 'There was no road here then', his wife recalled. 'The beds and the tables and chairs were all put



on wheelbarrows and we'd push them through the bush to bring them down here.' In terms of bushwalking, Barrett describes the 1960s and 1970s as his 'dormant period' although clearly he engendered a great love of wilderness in his children. The six Barrett 'kids' have become keen bushwalkers and climbers.

In 1976 Barrett had to retire from his job as a clerk with the Sydney County Council. He speaks highly of the Glenbrook doctor who recognised his stressed and anxious state as war neurosis. In 1980 this diagnosis came with the advice: 'Get back to walking.' Barrett describes what ensued. 'It was well over 25 years since I had really walked, but my condition was pretty good. Living here in Glenbrook, you walk through a little chimney in the rim rocks and you're in the National Park. I decided to walk out to The Oaks and north to Woodford. My intention was to return home by train, but when I reached Woodford I decided to return via my outward route. Later I worked out that it was 58 kilometres. I wore out a pair of sand-shoes; I walked so much I wore them out over one walk.' This heralded Barrett's return to serious bushwalking.

With this reintroduction to the wilds Barrett experienced the canyons. In the 1950s Arethusa was the only accessible canyon recognised, and Barrett was among the early adventurers to undertake it. 'In the '60s and '70s those magnificent canyons in the central Blue Mountains from the Grose area north to the Wolgan and the Capertee were opened up, and I did quite a lot of those. That was a bonus that I'll ever be thankful for, coming back to walking when these canyons were discovered.'

Even when Barrett was 60 the 'kids' could barely keep up. Since then husband and wife have again traipsed their beloved mountains and taken a stream of visitors to Kanangra and the Shack. This new lease of life sparked a resurgence in Barrett's writing for *The Waysider*.

Barrett has written consistently for the club magazine and contributed extensively to the anniversary volumes of *The Catholic Bushwalker*. These publications contain countless interesting articles and you don't need to be Catholic to find them fascinating reading. Barrett's name appears under some photographs and articles, but I began to recognise his writing in many unsigned articles. I asked him about this and he replied: 'I have no need to splatter my name all over these documents.'

Barrett's first book was meant to be a six-page article about the Shack. In 1990 it evolved and was published as *The Shack Country and Old Burrigorang*. He said that after this book was published his brain was spilling over with information and he felt compelled to write more. One of the sources of this information was the mail that flooded in from readers of his first book.

For six years Barrett's books tumbled out. *Cox's River* was the next in 1993. This,

getters and early explorers. More stories of the settlers and explorers unfold in *Kanangra Walls and Place Names of the Blue Mountains and Burrigorang Valley*, both published in 1994.

As affirmed by the latter book, place-names hold a deep fascination for Barrett. He recounted that 'the ten months it took me to write that book were a wonderful experience, tracking down one after another the names I didn't know'. Barrett discovered the origins of about 1200 names, but a few important ones eluded him. Scott for Scotts Main Range, Harry of Harrys River and Boyd of the Boyd Range remained unestablished at the time of publication.

For much of the nomenclature Barrett relays stories of the people and events for which the wild places of the southern Blue Mountains were named. 'Most of the names have a bushwalking origin, many of them contributed by Myles himself. Of course, he was an obsessive name giver', explained Jim. 'In the early 1900s Myles appeared on the scene and the great walkers followed him, particularly Gordon



*Iver Pedersen, Barrett and Jack Murphy on the Tasman Glacier en route to the Malte Brun Hut, New Zealand Alps, 1955. The photographer, Frank Cooper, perished in February of that year while descending Mt Cook in bad weather and poor visibility after making the first full double-traverse with Murphy. Nine months later Murphy died while training club members in rockclimbing and abseiling in Glenbrook Gorge, Blue Mountains.*



*John Chalk (left), Ted Plowman and Barrett on top of Frenchmans Cap, western Tasmania, 1953. Barrett's 'most memorable' day of walking came the following year when he reached the top of Federation Peak. Barrett collection*

Barrett's favourite, is unfortunately out of print and difficult to find. Next came *Kowmung River*, peppered with wonderful photographs and a wealth of stories relating to Colong Caves, the battle for the native forest of the Boyd Plateau, gold-diggers, cedar

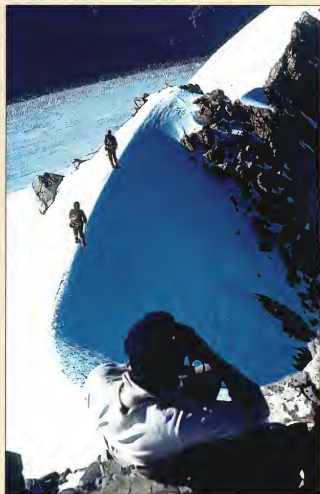
Smith, Max Gentle and members of clubs like the Warrigals, the Sydney Bush Walkers and the Mountain Trails Club. Those names will live forever in Davies Canyon, Gordon Smith Chimney, Rudders Rift and Gentles Sheardown.... With the bushwalkers' gradual

infiltration of the Blue Mountains came also the basis of bushwalking nomenclature.'

*Yerranderie—Story of a Ghost town and Life in the Burrangorag* were both published in 1995. The first time Barrett set foot in Yerranderie he and Hugh Smith had walked there from Kanangra by way of Mt Guougang, Coxs River, the Kowmung, Scotts Main Range and Bymes Gap. Barrett describes Yerranderie in 1949 as 'still clinging to the

If you're planning a walk in the southern Blue Mountains, read what Barrett has to say about the history of the area. His books make great campfire reading and lead to lots of entertaining conversation.

I asked Barrett whether he would write any more books: 'No...er...the Katoomba book was the last one. One or two little books associated with the club I'll probably do if I get time.' He



**Above,** Catholic bushwalkers on the verandah of the Shack, Scotts Main Range, Blue Mountains, 1951. Built in 1940, the Shack and the Ironbark Chapel enabled walkers to stay overnight and hear Mass on Sunday mornings. Barrett is at far right in the middle row. Dud O'Gara. **Left,** Barrett spent two months climbing in the Mt Cook region of the New Zealand Alps in 1955. In this photo the party is negotiating a snow arete during the descent from Mt De La Beche. Jack Murphy

glorious days of the silver/lead boom, yet within a decade of being quite lifeless'. The decline of Yerranderie was quickly ensured by the flooding of the Burrangorag Valley. The construction of Warragamba Dam not only severed bushwalking access to the southern Blue Mountains from the east, it also cut off Yerranderie's access to Camden. The Burrangorag settlers were driven from their homes. Many of the displaced settlers were people known to Barrett. With his return to walking, he felt a need to capture the old-timers' recollections of the Burrangorag Valley. His wife said, 'Jim wanted to catch the history from their lips, before they died, and he did'.

*The First Bushwalker—The Story of Fred Eden* (1996) takes a different direction. It tells the story of a Swiss/English traveller who, in 1891, undertook a 65-day walk from Melbourne to Sydney, and walked extensively throughout South Australia, Tasmania and the Blue Mountains.

*Narrow Neck and the Birth of Katoomba* (1996) is the last book in Barrett's series. It describes the attempt to develop Narrow Neck and the battle to preserve it. It records the Aboriginal history, the early European development of Katoomba and the recent changes in vegetation.

explains that writing his books through the 1990s resulted in his other home tasks being seriously neglected. Pat described living with Jim-the-writer. 'Usually there [were] maps all around and you weren't touch anything 'cause he's getting back to that.' There were constant cries of 'Don't touch that pile' and 'Where's that letter?' Barrett wrote his notes by hand and for years every table and chair was covered with untouchable, half-finished chapters of loose pages, jammed under rocks. 'It was horrible', according to daughter Jo. 'You couldn't open the back door in case the wind blew precious photos from one chapter on to the bundle of another.'

Barrett is a conservationist, an explorer, a gardener and a lover of nature. He is also a writer, a researcher, an historian, a photographer, a music lover; an intellectual. As a war veteran he has overcome harsh experience to make enduring friendships with Germans. Barrett is deeply spiritual, a devout Catholic and has been a member of the CBC for more than 50 years. In the Blue Mountains he has contributed enormously to the exploration and subsequent recording of bushwalking and local history. Jim Barrett's achievements will continue to enhance the experience of bushwalkers for generations to come. 📖



**Sandy Holmes** lives in the Blue Mountains and has recently completed the Advanced Certificate in Outdoor Guiding. She teaches her two sons at home and they bushwalk frequently, learning about plants, fauna, ecosystems, geology, navigation, safety and local history.

# Sirens and Salt Lakes

Greg Pritchard accompanies Australia's best-known 'adventure couple', Jon and Brigitte Muir, on a surreal Australian walk

*A* blank page. *Tabula rasa.* A large, white sheet that stretches in every direction as far as I can see. I write my way across it, 'the archive of walking', fading into the mirage where solidity vanishes and everything floats uncertain.

Yet this blank page is not empty. With sharpened awareness I see every grain of salt, every insect entombed in white, every shadow on the lake, every raised lump. In total silence I can hear voices singing. *Sirens.*





*Caught between surrealism and minimalism:  
Jon Muir plies his (c)art across Lake  
Gairdner's large, blank canvas under the  
biggest sky imaginable. Even loaded with  
water, provisions and equipment, carts  
make salt-lake travel surprisingly easy.  
All uncredited photos Muir collection*



**YOU MAY CONSIDER YOURSELF AN EXPERIENCED** Australian bushwalker. You've walked the Alps, Tassie, Croajingalong and the Flinders. Nothing, however, will prepare you for this. This is the ultimate Australian walking experience. Australia is the oldest, flattest, driest continent on earth yet most bushwalks take the mountainous, well-watered paths. Like the population, bushwalkers mostly hug the green fringes of the continent.

There isn't anywhere flatter on earth than South Australia's salt lakes. It is the driest part of the driest State on the driest continent. The only water is what you can haul behind you on a cart. Walking across huge salt lakes is the best way to experience Australia's vastness, its aridness, and your own insignificance.

*'Walking across huge salt lakes is the best way to experience Australia's vastness, its aridness, and your own insignificance.'*

Out here on the lakes any evidence of humanity is mostly tens of thousands of years old, remains from a culture sufficiently ancient to match the land. It is an indication of a people who existed here—from when these desiccated lakes were huge inland lakes teeming with life—until relatively recently.

I have now been fortunate enough to be in these bizarre areas twice, both times in the company of Jon and Brigitte Muir. Three years ago we walked to the lowest part of the continent, the centre of the lower eastern arm of Lake Eyre. Our attempt to walk to the end of the Hunt Peninsula was thwarted by a slush zone that bogged one of the carts. Nevertheless, we walked some 100 kilometres, which included four full days on hard, white salt.

In July last year I returned to South Australia with the Muirs for a short walk on Lake Gairdner and Island Lagoon. In the interim Jon had twice traversed Lake Frome (both axes) and had aborted several attempts to wander near Lake Torrens. He had also continued our Eyre walk with an attempt at a south-north crossing followed by an incredible 40-day solo walk down Cooper Creek. He has since been back to Gairdner and has done a south-north and return traverse.

Compared with these trips of Jon's, ours was a pleasure jaunt. At a time when 'adventurers' were drowning in Switzerland and getting lost in the Western Australian desert we were determined that we were just out for a 'little walk'. There was to be no adventure. We had planned adequately and had enough food, and water for 12 days (four litres a day each). All this, and our personal gear, was hauled behind us on two carts, the large super-cruiser with its chunky pneumatic tyres and the smaller baby-cruiser. On this trip—

as we were going in a big circle—we had the luxury of a depot mid-walk where we left 60 litres of water and five days' supplies.

After driving from Natimuk in western Victoria we slept by the road outside Port Augusta in South Australia. The next day we drove along red dirt roads through one property and on to another. We had obtained permission from the owners of stations through which we would drive or walk though while on the lakes we were within National Park boundaries. We spent the whole day establishing the depot and finding our way down farm tracks to the lake.

By the time our vehicle pulled over the last hill, and we could see the lake, I was itching to get started. Immediately it was ob-

vious that Gairdner was different from Eyre. Instead of an empty horizon, cigar-shaped islands were floating in the mirage. It had rained on the way over and Lake Macfarlane, which we had crossed, looked wet. Rain on Eyre had forced us off the lake and made for hard hauling. I was hoping to avoid rain on this trip. From our shore camp there was little sign of hard salt, only a hint of whiteness in the distance, far out in the brown.

As a shitty dawn lit the scene, amid very light rain, the view was none too promising. It looked like a haul out into the mud and after we packed and set off that was what we found. Before too long the baby-cruiser was hopelessly bogged and we loaded everything on to the super-cruiser and all pulled. A harness system locks one person between the shafts of the cart—the 'ox'—and the others can then pull on ropes to help—the 'huskies'. It took all three of us straining in the harnesses to continue forward momentum, albeit at a speed which would have embarrassed a glacier.

After 13 long, trudging kilometres the mud began to take on a frosty appearance, covered by a smattering of salt crystals. Before long the covering was total and we pulled up on to hard salt, the best surface on which to walk. It can vary between firm and springy salt and hard concrete. On this the carts can be pulled effortlessly and one person can easily manage 100 kilos. The texture of the salt has amazing variety with crystalline hexagons a metre across, rice grains, buckled salt, brown swirls, and much more.

Because the surface of the lake is so flat the difference between standing and sitting remarkably alters what you can see, and can bring trees into view on the shore. Often you walk towards what looks like a

large log inexplicably lying on the salt only to find that it is just a clump of mud lifted by a camel's hoof. At times I was convinced that flocks of birds were ahead and then discovered that they were slightly raised imprints of kangaroo tracks.

Animals don't seem too worried by the salt and at various times we saw kangaroos,



wallabies, emus and camels casually passing in the mirage. Sheep wander out on to the islands—usually a one-way trip—and goats inhabit some of them. In places the soft salt is a boggy trap; Jon recently found four dead camels. But usually animals treat it as a quick, safe way to travel.

On the first day the salt only lasted a kilometre before we pulled into a little cove on what we dubbed Ruby's Rocky Island on Mars, a very beautiful island composed almost entirely of chunks of red basalt—like many of Gairdner's isles—and ringed by one to two metre high cliffs. The colours of the island, red and green, make it very Piltara-like in appearance. A resident wallaby population is on the island and kestrels would hang in the warm air.

We quickly unharnessed and raced to the highest point. Below us was one of the most beautiful views I have ever seen. The salt continued unbroken on the other side of the island, a white, swirling expanse that looked like a time-delay film of a harbour, or the top of clouds viewed from a tall



peak. Littered over the shining whiteness are numerous, red islands, like boats in a current. In the distance, cigar-shaped, rise the red peaks of the Gawler Ranges.

As beautiful as Ruby Island is, we left the next day and trekked north on good salt to the large island. Here among the whispering trees we set up camp for two nights. It was

and start again. With a little scouting, however, we found a slightly easier way through. By 'easy' I mean all three of us straining in harness, everything again on one cart. Our walking stocks picked up mud until we were lifting a couple of kilos on each swing, and our shoes weighed even more. I decided on a career in politics—so good did I become at

teemed with life: kangaroos, emus and occasionally sheep. There is a lot of birdlife but it is hard to identify species when hauling the carts; you must always watch your step and are continually plotting the easiest course. There are various trees in the swales including, the map says, 'attractive myalls' although we were not sure which ones they were.



*Though they have both stood on the world's highest summit, Brigitte and Jon Muir cannot resist the lure of one of the globe's lowest places: the salt lakes of inland Australia. Jon calls these lakes 'the sensible person's Antarctica'. Greg Pritchard*

too early in the trip for a rest day although Brigitte took the opportunity to do some reading. Jon woke early and went for a solo 40 kilometre walk to the far shore. I opted for a lighter day, traversing a small archipelago near the island, bagging and naming 11 islands: Mirror Reef, Islay, Red Dome, Potemkin, Dead Sheep, Foil, Kidney, Soft, Black, Boggy Not Much Island, Grey Knob and Little Grey Knob. I then slogged out to the far point through thick mud, taking the easier option along the beach to return.

This cloying mud was worrying. However, we gambled on heading out on to it the next day for the trip to shore rather than face the better known variables of the beach. For a while things went smoothly but then both carts bogged completely: the 'Shoals of Doom'. It looked as though we would have to retrace our steps for ten kilometres

mud-slinging to lighten my stocks. We slogged for an hour, rested, an hour, rest...

One characteristic of salt-lake travel is that distances and sizes are almost impossible to judge. Any one off from the others is quickly dwarfed and made insignificant by the landscape. An island will appear to be miles away and then suddenly rush up at you. The forest on the shore will turn out to be a clump of low bushes. In no time at all (half a day) the shore came to us and we pulled up exhausted on to dry sand and a camp. Everywhere around us, in wind blow outs on the dunes, were worked rock fragments and microliths, evidence of the earlier population of these lakes.

The next few days we followed a series of vegetated 'swales' between big dunes, and along smaller salt lakes. The latter make for easier travel with the carts. The swales

On one patch of shore sand, pulling the super-cruiser on my own I tweaked my Achilles', which slowed me down. That night I was depressed thinking that I would not be able to continue. With care, stretching, aspirin, and Voltaren four times a day I was able to continue. My foot, though, was confused with the mixed message; rub on anti-inflammatory, then walk 20 kilometres?

Midway down the chain of lakes we came to our depot, a chance to get clean socks and more weight for the carts. We left a smaller depot and headed down to Salt Creek, a mostly dry creek-bed that runs for over 50 kilometres into Island Lagoon. The walk down it is a treat. We had left the super-cruiser and went with packs and only the baby-cruiser loaded with water. The creek winds its way down little gorges and open clay pans. We saw goats and dingoes (by the

time we returned this area had been baited for the latter). There were large pools of salty water and many dead goats that had tried to drink from them—a reminder of the consequences of being out here unprepared.

The name of our objective, Island Lagoon, suggests deck-chairs, hula girls and pina colodas. The reality is far more beautiful; a wide, brown bay and a large, white lake that stretches across to the Stuart Highway. On it are four conical islands, the largest of

water for a rest day. After discussion we decided that we could string the food out for another day and, if we could spend a day without drinking more than two litres each, we would have enough water to get back to the supplies at the super-cruiser.

I spent the morning lying in the dust of camp talking to Jon and eyeing my water-bottle. We could not walk around too much, or get hot, or we would get thirsty. In the end we managed easily, but it gave us some idea of what it would be like to run out of water, something I'm sure I want to avoid.

How often in Australia do you get to stare at your destination for the entire 26 kilometres of your day's walk? This is what we did on Island Lagoon. A large, dark spot on Nedlebutanyie was our target and after a day's walk over salt and mud we could see that it was a small clump of trees halfway up the island, the Eagle's Eyrie (there was an old eagle's nest there complete with feral cat skull), which turned out to be the perfect camp-site. When we climbed up from the lake we could look back and see that in most places we had missed the good, hard salt.

*'How often in Australia do you get to stare at your destination for the entire 26 kilometres of your day's walk?'*

which—Nedlebutanyie—is a big, volcano-shaped peak rising a staggering 90 metres from the salt. While that may not sound much, let me assure you that with the weird perceptions you get on the salt it does indeed look huge.

Before we could venture out on to the Lagoon we had to spend a day in limbo. Brigitte's ankle was hurting and she needed to rest it but we had not budgeted enough



*The vivid and varied colours of the islands are an incredible contrast to the subtle hues of the salt. Jon Muir on the shore of Ruby's Rock Island on Mars, looking back at the day's track.*

## Adventures in my own backyard

Jon Muir tells Greg Pritchard about his interest in Australia's salt lakes and deserts

### How long have you been going out on the salt lakes?

A long time. When I first came to (Mt Arapiles, Victoria) in March 1980, I saw the salt lakes and went to their edge. They looked interesting. In March 1985 I first crossed Mitre Lake with Geoff Little, HB (Malcolm Matheson) and Lydia Bradley (after an unsuccessful attempt with HB and Tony Dignan several days before) on planks, which were a bit like skis. I then used cross-country skis and made several traverses on the Wimmera lakes. My thoughts turned to Lake Eyre back then. We were due to go in 1989 but the lake filled and I didn't make it until 1996. So I guess I've been traversing salt lakes for 15 years.

### Was the Lake Eyre trip your first trip to the deserts?

No, I'd done a number of small trips, to Uluru and Mootwingee (National Park). My first long trip was in 1995 with Kevin Rohrlach and Louise Shepherd. Kev was 70 and he'd been a client on Aconagua. He said he'd always wanted to walk across the Simpson and would I be interested? I'd just finished Warren Bony-

thon's book on walking the Simpson and said yes. We planned it in the mess tent at Aconagua Base Camp.

### Had Kevin Rohrlach been around Eyre before?

Yes, Kev had established land-speed records on Lake Eyre before Donald Campbell. A lot of them on motor bikes. Some of the records still stand. Campbell had got him on side as his adviser before he even got out here.

### Have you changed your focus from mountains to salt lakes?

No, not really. I've done some big sea-kayak trips and a polar walk (See Info, *Wild* no 72) as well as the salt lakes. I spend more time walking off the lakes in the outback than on them. I couldn't go to Aconagua last year because of the walk to the [south] pole. I'm not sick of mountains but my preference is for more desert trips—they're simpler. You just travel down the road; I don't have to get on a plane of which I'm scared and travel to the other side of the world where people speak a different language.

I also like the desert trips because they are safer. There's very little danger on the outback

trips. All wilderness areas are a trap for young players but if you're prepared and have a bit of common sense, they should be very safe.

I'm not sick of the mountains; it's more that I'm getting into Australia, learning to survive in this environment. The sea kayak and the carts are tools that allow me to get to where I want to go.

### What are the rewards of doing desert trips?

Similar to those in the mountains, I suppose. I think people are just blown away by the outback, getting away from where the four-wheel-drives go, and just having an adventure. Part of the reward is that the more effort you put in, the more you get out of it. It's amazing how much more you see when you are on foot. When you're in a four-wheel-drive it's like being in a spaceship. You land occasionally and have a look around but you miss a lot of the subtleties of where you are travelling.

Australia has amazing wilderness areas. The potential for adventures in Australia is almost unlimited. You don't have to spend a fortune to go overseas. I think it would be healthy if more Australians went on adventures in their own backyard.



*Though it is difficult, life on salt is not impossible. Spiders and other insects live there and large mammals such as kangaroos, emus and camels cross it at will. The latter can sometimes be seen shimmering in the distance like ghostly caravans.*

On Island Lagoon once again the silence turned into music and voices. Sirens calling me to Nedlebutanyie. At one point, did the chorus sound like the Bronski Beat? Was I going mad? No, I realised that Brigitte had that particular group on her personal stereo and I was catching little strains of it. Normally, though, the music did not come from her stereo equipment but seemed just at the edge of hearing, no doubt the symphony of wind and blood in my ears. Everything was amplified; the straw on my water-bottle made noises in the wind. At one point I was convinced that a helicopter was behind me but it was just my scarf flapping in the breeze.

We spent a wondrous night on top of Nedlebutanyie, a place even more beautiful than Ruby Island, if that were possible. The island is quite steep and you feel as though you are on a magic carpet, floating over clouds. As the sun sets, the salt glows white. On the closest shore, a mere ten kilometres away, the lights of the Woomera Prohibited

Area were busy. The shore there, in failing light, looks soft and ancient, shadowy gullies cutting through brown hills. I was reminded that we don't own the land, we merely visit it for a short time.

To the west huge hulks of remnant hills rise from the plains; the largest and furthest south is South Oakden Hill. Hawks and swallows played in the air that gusted the island's sides, kangaroos grazed the base. At one point four emus glided in below us, like ballet dancers on ice-skates, and proceeded to pick around the base of a very green clump of pittosporum. Our limited supplies allowed us some tortillas and salsa, washed down with wishful thoughts of the bottle of Stone's Mac we'd carefully transferred to a plastic bottle, then left in the car. We hadn't taken a tent but there was enough flat sand at the Eagle's Eyrie for the three of us, comfortable in a 'Million Star Hotel'.

Before I'd left on the trip I'd had a nightmare about being killed by lightning and

when the next day dawned dark and foreboding I was out of there. I'm not normally worried too much by thunderstorms but I knew from experience on Lake Eyre that there are few places where you feel as exposed in a storm as in the middle of a salt lake. I hammered the walk back to camp, sticking to better salt. 'Better' does not do it justice, however. This was some of the most beautiful salt I have ever seen—pink and yellow, looking by turns like freshly forked smoked salmon or delicate soap flakes. It was a joy to travel over, particularly as the storm proved to be a false alarm.

For the next few days we retraced our steps, gradually reacquainting ourselves with stores and equipment until we arrived back at the depot. On our last day Jon and I walked 20 kilometres down salt lakes and swales to the car. We both stood atop a large dune to look back into the magic space of Lake Gairdner. Jon was planning to return in only two weeks. I stared out at the mirage, wistful, my writing on this page over for now.

It took most of that day to retrieve the depot, Brigitte and our equipment and to find our way out along the farm roads. This was followed by a pleasant cuppa and chat with the property owners. We arranged permission for one final spot of exertion, a quick ascent of South Oakden Hill. This rises some 160 metres just off the road and is composed of millions of interesting lumps of rock, each with a hole or blob on it. I searched frantically for one with an image of Elvis or Christ but to no avail, the best shape I found was that of a penguin.

## Greg Pritchard

has been, among other things, a climber, journalist, security guard, chef, poet, dishwasher, grape picker, publisher, editor, rat killer, climbing instructor and wheat silo operator. His most recent endeavours are as a PhD student in literature and a desert salt-lake enthusiast.



It was great to sit on the top of this hill and look out over Island Lagoon to the island we had climbed. All around us the plains stretched out, looking much like a Fred Williams painting.

Walking salt lakes is truly an incredible experience. Jon calls it 'a sensible person's Antarctica'. Not even a bad counter meal, being rained on in the Port Augusta caravan park, a wet trip home and the fact that we got all our cameras stolen in Augusta could diminish the experience we had shared, particularly when the police found our cameras.

On the long, wet drive back I stared out of the window at the landscape. It became greener the further south we went. I already missed the subtle hues of the desert, the purity of the salt lakes. There can be no finer walking experience in Australia than writing your way across a blank, white sheet, the haunting siren songs ringing in your ears. ☹





# UNFINISHED

*'A short distance beyond the summit at a wonderful, natural lookout, we took in the spectacular vista. We babbled like idiots at our good fortune in having such an unspoiled and rarely visited wilderness all to ourselves.'* Wild founding Director Brian Walters restores his composure for the obligatory photo. All photos Chris Baxter collection

**IN ONE SENSE THE REDISCOVERY OF A SCHOOL-**boy journal in a battered old exercise book was the impetus for the trip. It told of the fulfilment of a childhood dream to climb East Gippsland's Mt Tambo. This was achieved with my mother and 12-year-old brother Paul one desperately hot day in January 1962 when I was fifteen. The faded handwriting tells how—equipped with only a small water-bottle between us and some lunch in an old school bag, and lacking even such fundamentals as a map or compass—our unlikely party traced and retraced a route on Mt Tambo's long, untracked South-west Ridge, which rises from Scrubby Creek.

In another sense a return bout was inevitable. Stumbling alone and exhausted on to the rocky eminence that dominates Mt Tambo's most imposing aspect, its southern—or Bindi—side all those years ago, even my wishful optimism couldn't suppress a nagging suspicion that higher ground may lie to the north—impossibly distant and protected by a nightmarish mixture of islands of unscalable boulders in an almost impenetrable sea of scrub. A chance return to the area more than 30 years later, the result of changed holiday plans, settled it.

On that visit (see 'Forgotten Peaks' in *Wild* no 60) my wife Sue and I obtained views of Mt Tambo from surrounding peaks that indeed suggested that Mt Tambo's 'Bindi summit' was somewhat lower than the true summit. Not only that; the two are a disconcertingly long way apart. By that time maps of the area

***'It was with emotion more than from the effort that my chest heaved; in my mind's eye I saw that puny 15-year-old shaking with a heady mixture of excitement, triumph and exertion.'***

were available (even large-scale topographic ones!) which confirmed it. And if we needed further proof, we reached the actual trig point in a long, hot day from the relatively elevated plains of Benambra.

A 1997 traverse with Brian Walters of that little-known section of the Great Divide, the Bowen Mountains (see 'Victoria's Unknown Dividing Range' in *Wild* no 68), entailed a traverse of Mt Tambo by its abrupt western

approach and down its even steeper eastern flank by which I'd first reached its trig point. Tantalising views of Mt Tambo's extensive and entirely untracked north-south aspect obtained on that trip settled it. After 38 years, the return bout was scheduled for the Melbourne Cup Day long weekend last year.

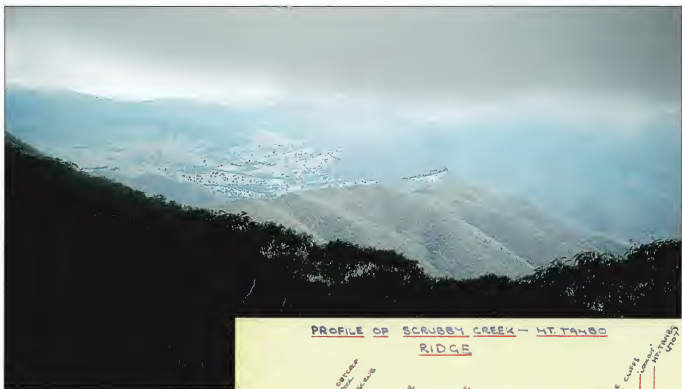
Today, the rough vehicle track to the start of the walk at Scrubby Creek still entails a degree of 'car mountaineering', even by the relatively benign approach through Bindi (private property) with its outstanding views of the snaking spur leading all the way from the creek to Mt Tambo's commanding Bindi summit. Leaving our transport where track, creek and spur converge, it was a case of 'up'. And how!

After an hour we at last reached the top of the steep climb to the top of the spur. Here the ridge flattens out to almost level and there is a large outcrop of rocks. We were very hot but lucky enough to find a small pool in the rocks to cool our faces.

Brian and I found the initial climb no less steep. Despite carrying packs which included

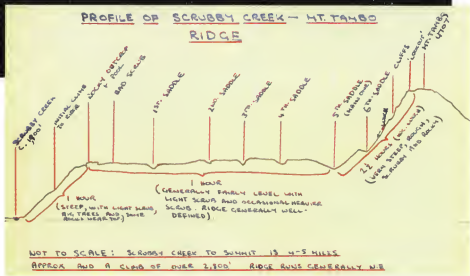
# BUSINESS ON MT TAMBO

After half a lifetime *Chris Baxter* comes full circle on this little-known Victorian Alpine outlier



**Above**, the route of ascent in both 1962 and 1999 (in the middle ground) below a rapidly falling ceiling of cloud. The photo was taken from near Mt Tambo's true summit. The Bindi summit is just out of the photo to the far left. Bindi is the cleared country.

**Right**, the same ridge, as depicted in the author's 1962 schoolboy journal.



food and water for two days, we took just an hour to reach the outcrop. We walked under an overcast sky which threatened rain; perhaps this was just as well for the 'small pool' was nowhere to be seen. But despite much cooler conditions we were sweating profusely, puffing hard and had hoped for a welcome supplement to our precious liquid cargo. Dramatic views of Mt Tambo's imposing and craggy western flank were already appearing through the trees.

The ridge continues in a north-easterly direction, is fairly level and quite well defined, with light scrub. Soon, however, we came to a patch of

very dense scrub which, fortunately, does not last for more than a few hundred yards. This was a real fight and greatly tired us. We passed four small saddles, then the ridge began to climb more sharply. Here another, larger, relatively open saddle is reached about two hours from Scrubby Creek. From here we had our first view of the summit. It looked like a great curling wave of rock. The ridge now rose steeply and we thought that at last we were at the foot of the main climb. However, we were disappointed to arrive at another shallow saddle. But this was definitely the last and there remained only a very steep climb to the summit itself.

Apart from an overgrown helipad in the middle of the long, level section, and lacking evidence of particularly troublesome scrub (probably explained by the fact that at 15 I'd had little experience of off-track walking), the route was remarkably unchanged by the intervening 38 years. Even our times between landmarks were the same. The way ahead, however, did not sound encouraging.

The ridge had now merged to become part of the peak. The scrub was very thick, the ground steep and rocky, and the weather extremely hot. Sitting down for lunch on a large rock, our

meagre supply of water was soon exhausted. After lunch the way became extremely steep. In places the way was guarded by mammoth slabs of rock with dense, prickly scrub in between. Finally, at about 3.00 pm, with the others feeling too exhausted to continue, Mum suggested that they wait while I hurried on to the top alone. Taking only the camera, I set off. Now able to keep more to the rock, I was able to climb faster. But I was beginning to feel exhausted. After 20 minutes the climb ended suddenly, four and a half hours after we'd left Scrubby Creek. I was standing on a rocky shelf overlooking Bindi far below. The actual summit is a big rock in the scrub about 50 yards in from my lookout over Bindi. Mt Bindi was very prominent ahead of me. Bindi lay at my feet like a map. I couldn't see towards the Cobberas because of scrub. The weather was perfect but hot.

In the event, however, the going was not as fearsome as a 15-year-old's journal might have suggested. Being mostly tea-tree, the scrub was scratchy rather than 'prickly' and not too dense. However, for the most part we were able to avoid it by scrambling carefully up an enjoyable route linking lines of weakness on the slabs. The final slab is indeed imposing, and we avoided it by judiciously using a handy gully which appeared on its left flank. The climb certainly ended suddenly. With little notice we found ourselves on the 'rocky shelf' overlooking Bindi on to which I'd staggered, exhausted, 38 years before. This time, however, it was with emotion more than from the effort that my chest heaved; in my mind's eye I saw that puny 15-year-old shak-

ing with a heady mixture of excitement, triumph and exertion. Despite our loads we had taken a similar time; in fact, quarter of an hour less. However, rather than experiencing enervating heat and dehydration, we were greeted by a cloud ceiling only a short distance above our heads and an icy blast that soon had us diving for a sheltered lunch place behind our exposed pedestal.

I hurried back down to the other two who were anxious for my return...at last we arrived at the rocks at the top of the final descent. We were so thirsty we drank from the dirty rock-pool. The

ence is only about 130 metres, the map told us that no less than five subsidiary summits had to be traversed in the roughly four kilometres between where we stood on the Bindi summit and the true summit of Mt Tambo. We'd spent four-and-a-quarter hours followed by a three-quarters of an hour break to come this far. Now, at 2 pm, it was time to get moving again.

In fact, the first task was to reach the high point of the Bindi summit—a mighty, isolated boulder only about 50 metres 'inland' from our vantage point but defended by an intimidating-looking mixture of scrub and precipitous



*'Now'; the author on the Bindi summit of Mt Tambo in 1999, with Bindi below. Above right, 'then'; the author's 1962 photo of Bindi from the same place.*



final descent seemed very long and we veered too far left, but we were guided by the Land-Rover's horn sounding in the dusk...

With our parkas on and appetites sated we emerged for the obligatory photographs and to take in our surroundings. The trees might have been a little higher, but it was much as I'd remembered it. The view to the south dominated. Bindi was still laid out like a map at our feet, with Mts Nuniong and Bindi beckoning beyond. We could follow 'our' spur snaking its impressively long way back down to Scrubby Creek. To the north-west, past the Sisters—whom we'd courted on our traverse of the Bowen Mountains two years earlier—lay the plains of Benambra and, on the horizon, the 'big guns' of the Bogong High Plains. The view to the north—the way ahead—was less clear. The land appeared to rise slightly as it buckled under its cloak of green. Occasional rocky outcrops showed through but told us little of the terrain. The western fall, however, was a breathtaking no man's land of plunging cliffs and soaring buttresses with remnants of vegetation clinging optimistically to their flanks. While we hoped to avoid direct confrontation with such obstacles, the way ahead was unknown ground. Would we face long sections of 'impenetrable' tea-tree? What would the navigation be like, particularly if the cloud ceiling were to drop just a hundred metres or so to engulf us? Would we find a camp-site? Where would it be? While the altitude differ-

scrambling. In the event, attaining it was remarkably simple. The scramble down the far side requires caution—this is no place for an accident—but soon we were picking our way through a delightful alpine landscape of twisted snow gums and jagged rocks. The dreaded tea-tree had failed to materialise! Taking every opportunity to spy out the way ahead before the ominous sky would fall on us, yet hardly taking our eyes off the map and compass, we followed the subtly serpentine ridge from landmark to landmark recorded on our precious map. Marvelling at the intricacy of the ridge, and glancing nervously skyward, we scarcely dared to think what a task it might be to find the way in thick cloud. Unexpected changes of direction, broad saddles and an indistinct ridge were the order of the day. But as we continued the way generally became less rocky, the trees bigger and the forest magnificent and ever more open. Occasionally we even detected what appeared to be extremely old blazes, perhaps marking a 19th century route. We did not see any other sign of human presence.

Views are limited, but on the last peak we were to traverse (in fact, it is a double peak) rock reappeared in the form of an imposing buttress. Scrambling up this exciting obstacle we broke clear of the vegetation and were rewarded with dramatic views of scudding, leaden cloud racing in to engulf the Bindi summit where we'd lingered only two hours before. We were now almost in cloud but,

despite our weariness, knew that we were close to the summit.

As we approached the summit plateau the temperature dropped appreciably and we were suddenly engulfed in an eerie mist that, while it was not yet 5 pm, suggested that nightfall was imminent. In the featureless void there was nothing for it but religiously to keep to the compass bearing we were now following. Time seemed to stand still. Surely we could not have overshot the summit? Are you sure the land is still rising? Then, just as our doubts might have forced a confused halt for a reassessment of our position, we recognised

our attention to the navigation diminished with the altitude and we found ourselves having difficulty in getting the map to match the landscape. While we were confident that we were still on the ridge we weren't quite sure just where! Eventually, after testing and rejecting a number of theories, and after a good deal of going to and fro, we decided that the only thing to do was to quit the ridge and head due west on a compass bearing to intersect the four-wheel-drive track (the Old Mill Track) we intended to follow for the rest of that day. Fortunately, we experienced delightful, easy walking leading gradually downhill

years before, below Mt Tambo's West Face. After this it swings south, then south-west, in a staggering emulation of a roller-coaster track—parts of which are the steepest we have seen. Fortunately, the nature of the track must surely deter all but the most gung-ho of the four-wheel-drive fraternity. We had trouble *walking* down some sections! Through the trees we were rewarded with spectacular glimpses of Mt Tambo's craggy western aspect—as imposing as any in the Alps—with the serpentine Scrubby Creek spur defining its southern end in the spur's long climb to Mt Tambo's regal Bindi summit.

Once in the valley we again met Scrubby Creek, at much the same time emerging on what must be some of Victoria's remotest freehold land, complete with a locked, run-down hut and a view of Mt Tambo similar to that of the Viking from the equally remote Wonnangatta Station in the heart of the Victorian Alps.

Turning south-east on the Scrubby Creek Track we soon ran into the only people we'd seen in two days, in the form of a four-wheel-drive convoy heading towards us. Leaving them to raise dust, we followed the track as the shadows lengthened to mark the end of a perfect day. As we walked we discussed whether we would make the effort to reach the car, now only a few kilometres away, and



features in the immediate vicinity of the summit. A little steep bit, and there it was, the unmistakable reassurance of the trig point! We retraced our steps 50 metres to a flat section and despite the early hour (just 5 pm) needed no discussion to pitch our tent-fly and set about the serious business of relieving our packs of much of their precious cargo of food and water.

Light rain during the night didn't bother us and by morning it was apparent that we were in for a fine, clear day despite lingering cloud over the headwaters of the Tambo River, to the south-east. Soon we were striding carefree through open snow gum, and around and over the many rocky knolls that litter the upper section of the long North-west Spur which runs from the summit plateau to the paddocks of Benambra. Our first stop was only a short distance beyond the summit at a wonderful, natural lookout where we had paused for photos during our traverse of Mt Tambo from the west two years before. Again we took in the spectacular vista—along Mt Tambo's craggy West Face, across 'our' spur up from Scrubby Creek, to Bindi; along the convoluted Bowen Mountains, with the Sisters prominent; to the plains of Benambra, with the Bogong High Plains serving as a white-splashed backdrop. And again we excitedly traced our route of two years before over the Sisters and along the Bowen Mountains to where we now stood. We babbled like idiots at our good fortune in having such an unspoiled and rarely visited wilderness all to ourselves.

The ridge became broader, less rocky and less defined as we descended. Unfortunately,



*The author on Mt Speculation in the Victorian Alps two months before his first Mt Tambo foray, described in his journal extracts quoted in this article. (Mts Koonika and Cobbler wink encouragingly over his shoulder.)*

through open woodland with parrots cavorting raucously in the treetops. After a while we came across signs of human intervention in the form of long-felled trees and traces of cattle. But it was taking longer than we had anticipated—it always does!—to intersect the track. Eventually, of course, we stumbled across it a short distance from where it leaves the paddocks of Benambra to enter the forest. It was a good place for lunch.

The track heads south-east, climbing gently for a few kilometres to reach the Great Divide at the saddle where we had camped two

so finish our walk that evening. However, when the track rejoined Scrubby Creek again, babbling across a pebble ford in a deserted clearing of springy grass and sighing gum trees with parrots chattering above, we instinctively knew that 'civilisation' would have to wait until tomorrow. We still had some dreaming to do. 🐣

*Wild founding Editor Chris Baxter* rates his four Mt Tambo forays as some of his happiest memories, shared with four people who are among those most important to him.

The best maps to use for this walk are the *Omeo-Bindi* and *Benambra-Lennox* 1:50 000 Vicmap sheets.





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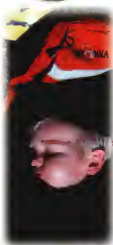
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# Mother Woila

Rob Jung describes a way to this elusive and sought-after New South Wales peak



*The Minima Range ridge in misty conditions. This is the alternative (mentioned in the text) to walking along the uninspiring bulldozed track. Both photos Rob Jung*

**THE WOILA IS A WILD AND RUGGED PART** of the Deua National Park, on the edge of the tablelands of south-eastern NSW. The area is about 100 kilometres south-east of Canberra. A beguiling feature is the forbidding and isolated hulk of Mother Woila, a mountain first climbed as recently as 1964.

These notes describe a three–four day circuit walk which follows the ridges around Mother Woila. From the most easterly parts are serene views across forested ridges, in contrast to the rawness of the Mother Woila side.

A small inholding of freehold land is on Woila Creek. The land was acquired fol-

lowing the 1860s Selection Acts and is still owned by descendants of the original selector.

Part of the network of fire tracks built in the Deua in the 1970s gives access to the area. These tracks are popular with groups of four-wheel-drive and trail-bike owners. In December 1997, a bad fire season, the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) bulldozed a further four kilometres of track from Dampier to near Mother Woila. This track was soon closed in a rough fashion, but will it remain closed in a future fire season?

Apart from these incursions, there aren't any tracks. The main part of the walk area lies within declared wilderness inside the Deua National Park.

## **When to go**

The cooler months of the year, especially spring and autumn, are the preferred times to do this walk. It is cold in winter, with short days and the possibility of wind storms or ephemeral snowfalls. Avoid hot summer, or prolonged dry periods, when the soaks may dry out.

## Safety

The area between Mother Woila and Scout Hat contains high cliffs and sections of loose rock. To traverse the latter is potentially hazardous at any time, but especially in wet weather. The most dangerous areas are the rocky routes around Mother Woila, the ridge south of Horseshoe Point and the scree slope immediately south of Tabletop.

Cyclonic wind storms occasionally occur in this area. The piles of wind throws found on Euranbene Mountain, Dampier, Tabletop and near Horseshoe Point show the power of these storms. Geoff Mosley's party was caught out in one near Horseshoe Point, on the night after they first ascended Mother Woila in July 1964.

## Maps

The maps needed for the walk are the *Badja* and *Snowball* 1:25 000 NSW Central Mapping Authority

## Further reading

- Mosley, Geoff 1997, 'Discovering Mother Woila', *Wild* no 66, pp 42–47.
- Prineas, Peter and Gold, Henry 1997, *Wild Places*, Colong Foundation, Sydney.

## Permits

Walking permits or fees are not required. However, the walk is largely within a declared wilderness area with few signs of other walkers. Please help to keep it that way. If you wish to camp within the freehold land at Woila Clearing, get permission from the landholders. Contact the NPWS in Narooma for details; phone (02) 4476 2888.

## Access

Access to this area is from the Braidwood–Cooma road. From Braidwood it is 66 kilometres to the Currumbene Road turn-off. From Cooma it is 73 kilometres by way of Numeralla. If approaching from Braidwood, the NPWS camp-site Berlang, 41 kilometres

At 78 kilometres another track comes in on the right. This is the old closed track from Pikes Saddle. There are grassy flats and water here. This is where you leave the cars for the walk.

## The walk

The walking times given are for good conditions, refer to people carrying packs and do not include stops.

Water is easily found in the major watercourses such as Woila Creek or Breakfast Creek. Although soaks are more difficult to find, there are some near the ridgetops—these include:

- pools in the tree-fern gully which collect water flowing south-west from Horseshoe Point plateau (GR 401108);
- pools in the small gorge which collect water flowing south off Tabletop (GR 405087);
- in thick sedge grass 130 metres downstream from where the bulldozed track crosses a small watercourse (GR 408123).

## Dampier to Horseshoe Point plateau (easy, three hours)

Walk east along the Currumbene Road to the summit of Dampier, then go to the south-east corner of the large clearing. An old survey sight-line and a large pile of earth are here. The pile is part of the attempt to camouflage the fire track bulldozed by the NPWS in 1997.

Use the fire track as it leads directly along the ridge from Dampier. Approach it by following the



*The North Face of Mother Woila. This tantalising summit was not reached by bushwalkers until as relatively recently as 1964! Even today few people reach the summit of Mother Woila. It is a difficult and hazardous objective.*

sheets. Roads are better shown on the *Batemans Bay* 1:125 000 forestry map. However, the new Currumbene Road, used to approach the walk, is not shown on any of these maps. It is marked on the NSW NPWS pamphlet, 'Deua National Park'. This new road joins the old four-wheel-drive one which went from Pikes Saddle to Dampier by way of Euranbene Mountain. From Pikes Saddle the old road is now impassable to vehicles.

south, is a useful Friday night camping point. The Currumbene Road is marked as four-wheel drive but in dry conditions it is negotiable in a two-wheel-drive vehicle until the ascent to Dampier (GR 385155). In wet weather, parts of the Currumbene Road become very slippery. Near the main road, the Currumbene Road crosses the shallow ford of Currumbene Creek. It has a stony bottom and is easily negotiated. At two kilometres the road forks—take the right branch.

old survey line south-east from the clearing, then merge left on to it after about 50 metres. Leave the less-than-inspiring track when you can and walk through forest and along the ridgetop, for example, near GR 410123 and 406116.

There are numbers of suitable places for small parties to camp in the Horseshoe Point plateau area. The main one is near water at GR 402112. An alternative is at Horseshoe Point.

## the walk AT A GLANCE

Grade	Moderate–hard
Length	Three–four days
Type	A classic ridgetop circuit walk, best suited to experienced walkers
Region	Escarpment ranges in south-eastern NSW
Best times	Spring, autumn
Special points	A rugged, remote area for small parties





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### Horseshoe Point plateau to Mother Woila

(optional, hard, three-hour  
return without packs)

Few people reach the summit of Mother Woila. It is a difficult and hazardous objective. To explore the plateau and take in its cliff-top views is a worthwhile alternative.

For the Mother Woila climb, a 15 metre hand line is useful. The trip is not recommended in wet weather. Follow the broad ridge south-west past the large NPWS helipad at GR 399110. After nearly one kilometre a small knoll with an awesome view to Mother Woila is reached. The chain-sawed trees there are courtesy of NPWS clearing in 1997.

Continue south-west down the steep razor-back to Mother Woila saddle. Woila gums are the eucalypts growing on this spur. They are unique to the rocky Woila ridgetops, and were first discovered here by a bushwalker in 1971. From the saddle continue by traversing round the base of the north-west

or even a respectable drop to give the sense of having climbed something. Getting there and back was the achievement.

Today the cairn and logbook are near the cliff-edge north-west of the summit where there is a view and a drop.

### Horseshoe Point plateau to Tabletop

(moderate-hard, two-three hours)

Follow the forested ridgetop, weaving through undergrowth and large fallen trees, and descend to Horseshoe Point. A short distance north of the point, pass through the cliffline by descending east through boulders. Traverse the base of the cliff past a small overhang to regain the ridgeline. This overhang may offer refuge in severe conditions. Within the next few hundred metres is another small cliff head to be skirted.

The remainder of the route to Tabletop is undulating and rocky, but shouldn't present any problems. In clear weather there are good views of Mother Woila and Tabletop along the way. Tabletop contains a confused jumble of fallen trees; however, there are pleasant camp-sites near the north-west corner. You also have good views from the cliff-edges.

### Tabletop to Woila Clearing

(moderate-hard, four-five hours)

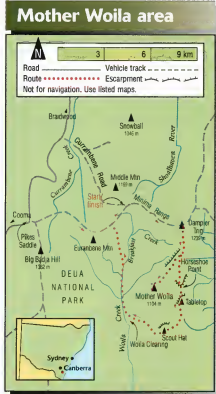
A short distance from the south-western end of Tabletop descend steeply to the east, dropping on to a loose, scree-filled ramp (GR 403085). Follow this ramp as it steeply descends south. Then make your way back on to the very narrow, rocky main ridge with its airy views.

The rock gradually gives way to a timbered ridge and easier travelling. More care is required around Scout Hat as the saddle immediately east is again narrow and rocky. From the summit descend west-south-west and follow this ridge to Woila Creek. Plenty of camp-sites are around Woila Clearing.

### Woila Clearing to the Currumbene Road

(moderate, five-six hours)

A number of routes are possible back to the Currumbene Road. One is the steady climb over Euranbene Mountain, which starts from Woila Creek at GR 365093. The old bridge track to the inholding at Woila Clearing went this way. For an alternative exit (shown on our map), walk further up Woila Creek to the junction of Woila and Breakfast Creeks. The spur climbs directly on to the plateau, which is crossed in a generally northern direction to reach the old fire track from Pikes Saddle. Follow this east to the start of the walk.



side of Mother Woila. Stay close to the base of the cliffs without climbing them. The traverse is downward and then across a loose slope to a distinct gully about ten metres wide. Scramble up this gully, which was Mosley's original route. Near the top of the gully where it narrows is the main obstacle to the climb, a four-five metre rock step. Once you are above the gully (GR 388103), it is a straightforward climb to the summit.

Peter Princeas (1997) expressed similar feelings to my own when he wrote of his ascent in 1976:

The summit was an anticlimax, just a rough cairn closed in by straggly forest, without views

Rob Jung began bushwalking in 1971 during his university days in Melbourne. He has lived in Sydney since 1979 and is a water chemist. His first trip to the Woila was in 1982, when he climbed Mother Woila twice on one trip. He takes photographs in the bush and has contributed to books, magazines and diaries.

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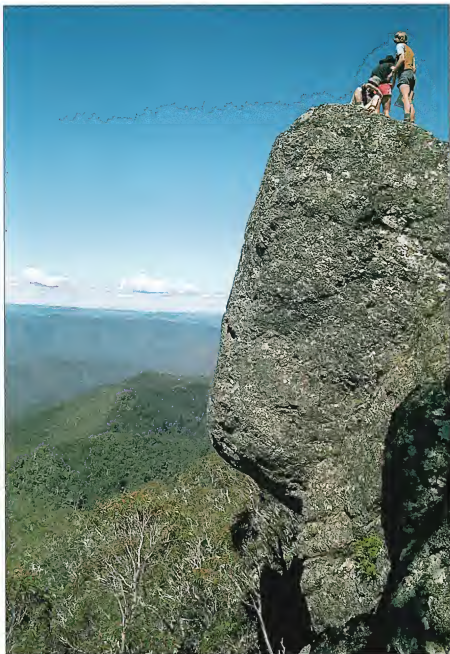
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## TRACK NOTES

# Mt Darling

*John Chapman takes the less travelled route into the historical Wonnangatta valley in the Victorian Alps*



*The rocky outcrop next to the summit of Mt Darling provides a grandstand view over the Wonnangatta valley. John Chapman*

**THIS PEAK IS ACTUALLY JUST THE END OF A** high ridge in the Alps. While not as spectacular as some other mountains it provides good views and very pleasant walking. The route passes through snow plains and by snow gums, has viewing points into Bryces Gorge and also visits the historical Wonnangatta valley. This circuit can be done in two hard,

long days or, ideally, as the medium, three-day walk described here.

### When to go

Late spring, summer and autumn all provide ideal conditions for this circuit. Winter is not suitable as snow often lies on the plains



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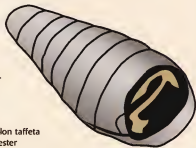
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Inner Soft-hand Micro polyester

Ultralite model	700	900	1100	1300
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Fill weight (gm/m <sup>2</sup> ):	1 x 100	2 x 100 top 1 x 100 bottom	2 x 150 top 1 x 100 bottom	2 x 175 top 1 x 150 bottom
Temp rating (°C):	0	-5	-10	-12
Comfort rating:	+25 to +5	+25 to 0	+15 to -5	+25 to -8
Length (cm):	225	225	225	225
Chest width (cm):	80	80	80	80
Foot width (cm):	50	50	50	50
Pack size (cm) L x diam:	22 x 14	27 x 16	28 x 16	29 x 18

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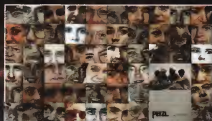
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# Tents for bushwalking

*John Chapman zips up and beds down for the night*



*No, this survey doesn't feature any tents-cum-lighthouses! Julian Atherstone gets cosy on an island in Blackstone Bay, Alaska. Fiona Groves*

EVERY WALKER HAS DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS for a tent and manufacturers have responded by providing a wide variety. Tents for bushwalkers range from tiny shelters to heavy, bombproof domes. The models surveyed are from the middle of this range and are suitable for two or more people walking in areas where rain can be expected. This extends from the wet season in the north to three-season use in the southern alpine areas.

Each supplier was asked to nominate three tents for general-purpose bushwalking. The object of this survey is to help you to find a tent suitable for your intended use.

## Intended capacity

This is the manufacturer's stated size; often width is considered with little regard for overall length of the occupants.

## Design

Designs have been classified according to the pole layout. Tents using crossing poles are called domes. The use of parallel or near-parallel poles classifies a tent as a tunnel. The pyramid consists of one vertical pole with a draping pyramid fly. Many of the domes are of a lightweight, hybrid design so don't expect the space or rigidity of a heavier snow dome.

## Maximum internal dimensions

The largest measured sizes of the inner in order of length by width by height. Generally, sizes are useful to compare space except for some irregular designs.

## Total weight

The weights of the tents in this survey have been supplied by the manufacturers; they include everything required for walking. Some manufacturers now quote either Spartan or

## Buy right

### Interior size

Lie down and make sure that the inner is long enough. Sit up and test whether there is enough space above your head.

### Entrances

Entrances vary widely and you should test how difficult it is to get in and out. Consider what it will be like in poor weather when you are trying to remove your waterproof jacket as you crawl in.

### Separate pitching

In warm climates you will often only need an insect screen. Check whether it's possible to erect the inner without the fly.

### Ease of pitch

If possible, observe a tent being put up and take it down at least once before buying.

Can the poles be inserted from either end? Are they the same size? Is there a preferred order for them to be erected? Are the pole ends difficult to attach, and is there any adjustment so that the tent can always remain taut as it stretches and ages?











### Door design

Many tents use the door for ventilation. Check whether you can leave the door open while it rains—some designs let the rain fall directly on to the inner when the door is open.




### Ventilation

Ideally, there should be two openings as high as possible. Check that they are adequately supported and stay open. Many flaps collapse when wet, thus becoming ineffective.

# Tents for bushwalking

		Intended capacity, people	Design	Maximum internal dimensions, centimetres, length x width x height	Total weight, kilograms	Poles	Number of		Pegs, minimum/maximum	Vestibules	Fly entrances	Roominess	Ease of pitch	Stability	Access	Value	Approx price, \$
Adventure Designs China																	
	Humpback No Compromise	2	Dome	230 x 120 x 110	3.5	2 1/2	6/12	2	2	●● 1/2	●●●	●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	560
	◀ Diamondback II No Compromise	2	Dome	215 x 145 x 120	3.7	3	6/12	2	2	●●●●	●● 1/2	●●	●●●●	●●● 1/2	●●	590	
Bibler USA																	
	Alwahnee * §	2	Dome	230 x 130 x 120	2.4	2	4/8	0	1	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●	1550		
	◀ Torre * §	2	Dome	230 x 150 x 120	3.0	4	3/13	2	2	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●●	●●● 1/2	●	1790		
Black Diamond China																	
	◀ Megamid §	2-4	Pyramid	270 x 270 x 170	1.6	1	4/8	0	1	●●●●	●●● 1/2	●●	●●●●	●●	300		
Eureka Korea																	
	Bike & Hike	2	Dome	260 x 150 x 90	2.3	1	4/8	0	2	●●	●● 1/2	● 1/2	●●	●●●●	250		
	Bushwalker ± §	2	Tunnel	220 x 120 x 90	2.5	2	5/10	1	1	●	●●●	● 1/2	●	●●●●	250		
	◀ Autumn Wind	2	Dome	245 x 145 x 110	2.7	3	2/10	1	1	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●●	380		
Fairydown China																	
	Escape † §	2	Tunnel	230 x 126 x 110	2.8	2	4/10	2	2	na	na	●●●	na	na	390		
	◀ Assault † §	2	Dome	220 x 120 x 110	3.2	2 1/2	2/18	2	2	na	na	na	na	●●●	530		
	Trilogy §	3	Dome	200 x 162 x 105	3.7	3	2/18	3	3	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	600		
Kathmandu Korea																	
	◀ Voyager §	2	Dome	208 x 127 x 102	2.6	3	2/14	1	1	●●	●●●	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●	500		
	Northstar	2	Dome	228 x 127 x 110	2.8	3	3/13	1	1	●● 1/2	●●●	●●● 1/2	●●●	●● 1/2	640		
	Mountain	2	Dome	220 x 140 x 105	3.6	4	4/22	2	2	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●●	●●●	●●	760		
Macpac New Zealand																	
	◀ Nautilus	2	Tunnel	220 x 140 x 100	2.6	2	4/10	2	2	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●	490		
	Apollo	2-3	Dome	220 x 140 x 115	3.2	2	2/10	2	2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	540		
	Celeste	2-3	Dome	215 x 120 x 105	3.2	2	4/12	2	2	●● 1/2	●●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	●●	740		
Mont Fiji																	
	◀ Dragonfly §	2	Dome	235 x 130 x 108	3.3	2	4/12	2	2	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	650		
	Wasp	2	Tunnel	230 x 135 x 106	3.5	2	4/12	2	2	●● 1/2	●●●	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	690		
Mountain Designs China																	
	◀ Hutt §	2	Dome	230 x 120 x 110	2.4	2	6/13	2	1	●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	380		
Mountain Hardware China																	
	Thru Hiker ± §	2	Dome	225 x 125 x 105	2.7	4	5/10	1	1	● 1/2	●●	●●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	490		
	◀ South Col ±	2	Tunnel	240 x 145 x 95	3.0	3	5/18	1	1	●● 1/2	●●●	●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●	540		
	Room for 3 ± §	3	Dome	280 x 200 x 120	3.7	3 1/2	5/10	1	1	●●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●● 1/2	590		
Salewa China																	
	◀ Micra §	1-2	Dome	210 x 120 x 105	2.0	2	2/8	1	1	● 1/2	●●●	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●●	370		
	Bergen §	2	Dome	220 x 140 x 110	2.7	2 1/2	4/12	2	2	●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	400		
	Sierra Leone	2	Dome	230 x 155 x 110	3.3	2 1/2	4/12	2	2	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	550		
Sierra Designs China																	
	Clip Flashlight CD	2	Tunnel	226 x 147 x 109	1.9	2	8/16	1	1	● 1/2	●●●	●●	●●	●●● 1/2	335		
	Orion CD ±	2	Dome	229 x 146 x 107	2.5	3	4/13	1	1	●●●	●●	●●● 1/2	●●●	●●● 1/2	390		
	◀ Meteor Light CD ±	2	Dome	249 x 152 x 109	3.8	2 1/2	6/14	1	2	●●●●	●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	●●● 1/2	480		

## Tents for bushwalking continued

			Intended capacity, people	Design	Maximum internal dimensions: length x width x height	Total weight, kilograms	Poles	Number of				Roominess	Ease of pitch	Stability	Access	Value	Approx. price, \$
								Pegs: minimum/ maximum	Vestibules	Fly entrances							
Snowgum Vietnam																	
	Ultraight f	2	Dome	270 x 158 x 110	2.2	1	6/8	0	2	●●●	●●●	●	● 1/2	●●●		250	
	Frontier f	2	Tunnel	215 x 158 x 95	2.5	2	8/12	2	2	●●●	●●●	●●	●●● 1/2	●●● 1/2		300	
	◀ Storm Shelter	2	Dome	215 x 145 x 118	3.2	2 1/2	2/10	2	2	●●● 1/2	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●		350	
Terra Nova China																	
	Mesa	2	Dome	220 x 130 x 110	2.8	2 1/2	2/18	2	2	●● 1/2	●●●	●●	●●●	●●● 1/2		450	
	Sirocco	2-3	Dome	225 x 150 x 116	3.7	3	6/18	1	1	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2		720	
	◀ Tornado V	2	Dome	220 x 118 x 110	3.7	2	6/18	2	2	●● 1/2	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●		740	
Vango China																	
	Micro TBS 250	2-3	Dome	230 x 120 x 115	3.0	1	4/14	2	2	● 1/2	●●●	● 1/2	●●	●●		380	
	Equinox TBS 200	2	Tunnel	230 x 150 x 110	3.5	3	9/15	1	1	●●●●	●●● 1/2	●● 1/2	●●● 1/2	●●●		450	
	Hydra 200+	2	Dome	225 x 145 x 110	3.8	4	16/24	1	1	●●●●	●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●		550	
Wilderness Equipment Australia																	
	Shadow	2	Tunnel	210 x 120 x 110	3.2	1	4/8	2	2	●●	●● 1/2	●●	●●	● 1/2		680	
	Second Arrow f	2	Tunnel	230 x 150 x 102	2.7	2	3/5	1	2	●●	●●●	●● 1/2	●●●	● 1/2		730	
	First Arrow	2-3	Tunnel	220 x 160 x 120	3.6	3	3/7	2	3	●●●	●●	●● 1/2	●●●●	● 1/2		950	
● poor    ●● average    ●●● good    ●●●● excellent    Value: author's subjective opinion    * Made from ToddTex, a waterproof, windproof and breathable fabric    § Optional fly																	
† Has side-entrance    ‡ Not assessed    † Has clear window    ¥ Optional extra pole    ‡ Not seen by referee    The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made																	

● poor   ●● average   ●●● good   ●●●● excellent   Value: author's subjective opinion   \* Made from ToddTex, a waterproof, windproof and breathable fabric   § Optional fly  
 † Has side-entrance   na not assessed   ‡ Has clear window   † Optional extra pole   ‡ Not seen by author   † Not seen by referee   The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

'in-use' weight, which seems to leave out extras such as pegs and carry bags. Ignore these lighter weights as you will need to carry the extras most of the time.

### Number of poles

The designation of a 'half-pole' in the table means that the tent has a shorter pole which does not extend to the ground. This is usually used to support the vestibule. All tents surveyed, except Black Diamond's Megamid, have aluminium shock-corded poles. Poles are made in various diameters and you should check carefully when purchasing a spare or replacement pole.

### Number of pegs

The 'minimum' of pegs are those required to put up the tent and fly. The 'maximum' is the sum of all peg and storm gey points.

### Number of vestibules

The number of unfloored vestibule areas that can be used for gear storage. One model has a small, unfloored area that was not counted as it hadn't any doors to it and would not be very useful in practice. Its primary purpose is ventilation, not gear storage.

### Number of fly entrances

The number of external doors into the tent fly.

### Roominess

This takes into account the manufacturer's intended capacity and rates this against

other criteria: the inner area, gear storage, head clearance and overall space. My build (I am 1.8 metres tall) and experiences in a wide variety of tents affected this rating.

### Ease of pitch

This is affected by: continuous pole sleeves, width of pole sleeves (some are very narrow!), whether the poles cross (it does make it harder to erect) and how diffusing pole and material lengths are handled.

### Stability

This rates the overall stiffness of a tent against side forces. As we could not test the tents in a wind tunnel this rating is subjective and affected by the way I have seen designs perform. Little features such as attachments between the fly and inner, internal stiffeners and how well cut the panels are can make a big difference.

### Access

This rates how easy I found it to enter the tent and sit down. Tents with high openings rate well; those with low or long entrances less so.

### Value

This is not simply a value-for-money rating. In rating models as general bushwalking tents I have considered various factors: the heaviness of the tent, its overall features and quality and its size, as well as the price. A low value rating does not mean that a tent is poor; it simply means that using my

criteria I would not select it for my walking use; that is to say for extended sheltered walks such as the Bibbulmun Track in Western Australia or the Great South West Walk in Victoria.

### Approx price

This is the recommended price including GST. The new GST should have a minimal effect on tent prices, which previously included sales tax. In future, prices could change as suppliers discover possible cost changes—at present the price reduction due to GST has been estimated to be less than \$20 for most tents.

Price gives some indication regarding quality and the amount of effort that went into the design. Tents manufactured in Australia and New Zealand are generally higher in price but are almost always of excellent quality. Tents manufactured in Asia can also be of high quality but they vary more—examine the little things such as stitching, placement of features and materials used as well as the company's reputation concerning tents.

### Availability

You will not find all the tents surveyed available in any one shop or even in every State. Tents require lots of floor space and are expensive to stock—most shops have only two or three brands and only some models on display. To see a wide variety it is necessary to visit many shops. ☹

See John Chapman's bio on page 36.

This survey was refereed by Stephen Curran.



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# GPS receivers

*John Poppins puts seven models to the test*

**SINCE THE LAST WILD SURVEY (ISSUE 67)** there have been continuing improvements to Global Positioning System (GPS) units for bushwalking. Once again they have become smaller, lighter, more accurate, faster in establishing position, and better able to continue operating under heavy forest.

The altitude calculated by a GPS is less accurate than the position. A sensitive electronic barometric altimeter in two new models improves the accuracy of altitude calculated and warns of weather changes.

Program upgrades for most of the current units can be obtained from the maker's Web site, improving in value with age.

Eagle/Lowrance is awaiting release of new models for bushwalking; visit [www.lowrance.com](http://www.lowrance.com)

## So, what is the use of a GPS?

- To assist with navigation to a desired location.
- To confirm a current position on the map.

When you can concentrate on navigation and visibility is good, and the terrain has distinctive shape, it is usually faster and more invigorating to navigate using orienteering techniques—a map, a compass and by observation.

However, a GPS gives you freedom to focus on other issues such as photography, botany, or survival in severe conditions.

To realise this advantage, preplanning is necessary. Time will be spent keying positions in and plotting positions back on to maps.

Bushwalking and ski-touring groups should consider carrying a light, low-cost unit as a safety item in case of a white-out or severe geographic embarrassment.

## The field tests

GPS units are complex devices with variations in features likely to suit different buyers. Each model has specific strengths; one model does not have them all.

## Buy right

- Check for attractive deals which include options at little extra cost.
- As an emergency device, the eTrex is attractive.
- For heavy and professional use, the 12XL, GPS 315 and Multi-Navigator present difficult choices, each with different benefits.
- When considering second-hand units, bear in mind that any unit that can process fewer than five satellites simultaneously will not perform well under trees. The tested units all process data from up to 12 satellites.



*You'll lose more than your way if you go out here without your GPS! Stephen Hall*

All tested units worked well under open skies. They established position within the times given in the specifications, and accuracy was well within 15 metres of a known survey point.

Field testing under difficult conditions entailed two tests:

1. We started the units in an open clearing from where they could establish an ac-

curate position and find all visible satellites, then moved at a steady walk into a gully under rain-sodden, 50-year-old mountain-ash forest and tree ferns.

2. We attempted a warm start under the wet forest after the unit had been turned off. The Garmins and Magellans performed alike in the first test. The display indicated that signals were being lost and regained rapidly,



but their position was maintained. The accuracy recovered quickly when we stopped to turn back. A Silva Multi-Navigator was not available for this test but performed as well as the others in a patch of forest in a city park. The MLR model required several ten-second pauses to recover position.

The warm start attempt under the wet forest defeated all units.

## Results

### Garmin eTrex

The eTrex is the smallest, lightest device and is attractively priced. Its accuracy, speed to establish position and tenacity under forest match the best. It is easy to carry; great for emergency location. Its innovative button placement works very well. It is a pity that

so much of the small position display is used for a cartoon when it could be used for larger figures and an indication of accuracy. There aren't any audible warnings; reliance is on displayed messages. It is surprisingly slow to respond to an abrupt change of direction. There isn't any user adjustment for proximity to a waypoint as a route is followed. However, the ability to update

## GPS receivers

	Garmin Taiwan/USA/Europe <a href="http://www.gmc.net.au/garmin/garmin.html">www.gmc.net.au/garmin/garmin.html</a>			Magellan USA/Taiwan <a href="http://www.magellan.com.au">www.magellan.com.au</a>		MLR/Raytheon France <a href="http://www.oceantalk.com.au">www.oceantalk.com.au</a>	Silva UK <a href="http://www.macsan.com.au">www.macsan.com.au</a>
Model	eTrex	eTrex Summit	12XL	GPS 310	GPS 315	SP12X	Multi-Navigator
Approx price, \$	345	685	585	375	495	330	795
Weight, grams	150	150	269	198	199	255	254
Size, millimetres	113 x 56 x 30	113 x 56 x 30	146 x 51 x 34	158 x 51 x 33	158 x 51 x 33	150 x 51 x 33	170 x 61 x 30
Batteries	2 x AA	2 x AA	4 x AA	2 x AA	2 x AA	4 x AA	2 x AA
Battery life, hours	10-22	10-22	12-24	Up to 20	Up to 15	8-16	10-100
Warm start, seconds	45	45	45	60	60	90	60
Hot start, seconds	15	15	15	15	15	30	10
Response time, paces	16	16 (presumed)	6	5	6	14	4
Waypoints/no of characters in name	500/6	500/6	500/6	100/4	500/6	600/6	1000/8
Comments	No	No	16 characters	No	20 characters	22 characters	Time, date, altitude
No of routes	1 (with 50 points)	1 (with 50 points)	20 (each with 30 points)	1 (with 11 points)	20 (each with 30 points)	20 (each with 20 points)	10 (each with 100 points)
Tracks	10 (2000 points total)	10 (3000 points total)	1 (up to 1024 points)	No	1 (up to 1200 points)	1 (up to 300 points)	No
Plotter	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Remember GoTo	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Man overboard	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Database	No	No	South Pacific	No	World cities	No	No
Estimated Position Error	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Audible alarms	No	No	Arrive, XTE, proximity	No	Arrive, XTE, proximity, anchor	No	Arrive message
Compass	No	Yes (accurate to 5°)	No	No	No	No	Yes (accurate to 3°)
Altimeter	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Sundry features		Altitude history, barometric history	Position averaging, odometer, sunrise and sunset times, speed average/maximum, distance	Odometer	Position average (auto), odometer, speed average, sun-and-moon rise and set times	User name, PIN number	Altitude maximum, barometric history, weather forecast
Software upgrade	Yes, V 2.05	Yes	Yes, V 4.55	No	Yes, V 3.05	No, V 1.30	Yes
Accessories	Lanyard, manuals		Lanyard, manuals, carry case		Lanyard, manuals		Lanyard, manuals, carry case
Optional extras	Carry case (\$30) PC cable (\$69) Car power cable (\$74) Bike mount bracket (\$37)	Carry case (\$30) PC cable (\$69) Car power cable (\$74) Bike mount bracket (\$37)	Remote antenna (\$117) PC cable (\$72) Car power cable (\$41) Car mount bracket (\$60)	Carry case (\$24) PC/car cable (\$104) Car power cable (\$52) Car mount bracket (\$52)	Carry case (\$24) PC/car cable (\$104) Car power cable (\$52) Car mount bracket (\$52)	Remote antenna (\$314) Carry case (\$29) PC cable (\$74) Car power cable (\$74)	PC cable/software (\$275) Car mount bracket and power cable (\$152)
Optional software	Mapsource database (\$175)	Mapsource database (\$175)	Mapsource database (\$175)	DataTrack management and plotting (\$154)	DataTrack management and plotting (\$154), DataSend database (\$143)	Waypoint Management, Valpoint (\$129)	GlobalMapPlanner (\$275)

**Footnotes are in the order the items appear in the table** Size: length x width x depth **Battery life** varies widely, depending on method of use **Warm start:** The time it takes to establish a position when the unit is turned on an hour or two after the last position fix **Hot start:** The time it takes to establish a position when the unit is turned on within two minutes of the last position fix **Response time:** The number of brisk paces taken before the unit responds to a reversal of direction. A short response time makes steering easier **Waypoints or 'points':** Landmarks, destinations, turning points and features to avoid are all stored by name in the GPS **Comments:** Additional information, such as time and date or a photograph/phone number, may be stored in this form **Routes** are groups of waypoints. They may be travelled forwards or backwards **Trace:** A 'small trail' trace of the user's route for retracing forwards or back. This is shown on the plotter display **Plotter:** A map-like display of your movements, with neighbouring landmarks, which can be zoomed and panned **Remember GoTo:** When turned on, does the unit remember the waypoint with which it was last working? If not, it takes a few seconds of pushing buttons to reset the desired point before checking progress. This takes time, power and risks error each time the waypoint is reselected **Man overboard:** A fast method for saving and returning to a waypoint in an emergency **Database:** Built-in coordinates for a large number of cities or other features **Estimated Position Error:** A computed geometric error dependent on the number and position of the satellites being tracked. It is a desirable feature which indicates the quality of your position fix. Additional errors can result from other causes such as atmospheric conditions and reflections, so this figure should be treated as optimistic **Audible alarms:** Some GPS units warn of arrival at destination, proximity to a turning point or a danger such as a reef, a dragging anchor, or a deviation too far off course (the latter is called 'Cross Track Error' or XTE). Alarms may also be displayed. Audible alarms make waterproofing more difficult **Compass:** An in-built electronic magnetic compass **Altimeter:** An in-built barometric altimeter for more accurate monitoring of climate and weather. Accurate altitude can improve position accuracy. The altimeter makes waterproofing more difficult **Sundry features:** These may include an averaging of position fixes to improve accuracy, an odometer, sun-and-moon rise and set times, average and maximum speed, and maximum altitude **Software upgrade:** Can the internal program be upgraded using both the Internet and a personal-computer cable option? The version of software tested is given **Optional software:** You can use a PC to prepare, store and edit waypoints, or to display and plot routes on to maps. This requires a PC cable option **The country/region listed after the manufacturer's name is where the products are made**

the software to later releases offers hope that some of these issues will be addressed.

### Garmin eTrex Summit

The eTrex Summit miniaturises an electronic compass and barometric altimeter into the same small package as the eTrex. A compass bearing has been added to the GPS display. Additional displays provide for calibration of compass and altimeter, and give plots of altitude and air pressure trend against time.

### Garmin 12XL

The 12XL is full of functions and is particularly efficient for users entering a series of waypoints to create routes, minimising the button pushing required. Its alarm beep is strong, alerting to the proximity of a change

of course, or danger points. Although requiring four batteries, it consumes them frugally. When carried under a roof and unable to pick up satellites the 12XL beeps loudly, then turns off automatically. When saving a waypoint it gives the choice of an immediate save, or averaging to improve accuracy. In Australia the unit is sold with the 'South Pacific' internal database of cities which includes major suburbs and small towns that can be checked easily. This database is fixed. The nine nearest user waypoints can be displayed, as can the distance and bearing between any two selected waypoints.

### Magellan GPS 310

Both Magellan units have an antenna which is held upright, rather than the flat antenna used by all the other models. The upright stance of the Magellans makes it easy to read the display without reflections when the unit is fixed on the vehicle dashboard.

The GPS 310 is affordable, as accurate and powerful as more expensive models and very quick to respond to changes of direction. It allows routes to be set up but hasn't any options for setting proximity to the turning points. There isn't a way to discover the Estimated Position Error. It hasn't an audible alarm and does not warn of loss of satellite signals other than by the disappearance of the small word 'Tracking' from the display.

### Magellan GPS 315

The GPS 315 is full of functions. Its display has navigation displays that can be customised including one with a very large, bold print. When carried under a roof the unit warns of loss of satellite reception for more than 15 seconds by beeping for about 5 seconds, but does not turn off. When standing still it automatically begins to average position fixes thus improving accuracy. The unit's warning beep is quieter than that of the 12XL. It saves and transfers altitude, time and date as well as position to and from a computer. The built-in city database includes regional cities. Using the database requires a guess about the size of the city required. The optional DataSend software and PC cable enable this database to be customised to suit the region of interest. The GPS 315 stores up to 19820 points of interest. DataSend has been 'Australianised' with vast amounts of local data.

### MLR/Raytheon SP12X

The SP12X has some features targeted at sailors, particularly in Europe. It is often supplied as an accessory to larger nautical systems. It is slower to 'find' itself than the other models and has greater difficulty maintaining position under heavy tree cover while

the user is moving. The SP12X has some unusual features, such as the option to personalise the unit with the owner's name and a four-digit PIN number to safeguard data. With its low price it is of interest in relatively open country and for marine use.

### Silva Multi-Navigator

The Multi-Navigator combines the GPS with an electronic compass, altimeter, and a clever system enabling single-button navigation back to a known point, using the compass in conjunction with the GPS to greatly lengthen battery life on extended trips. A prototype was tested and confirmed claims of its speed to establish position under tree cover.

The Multi-Navigator has a unique, automatic compensation for magnetic deviation. It does not have the plotting feature of the majority of the models tested; instead, it uses a display with lower power consumption and capable of



*The Magellan GPS 310, top left, and the Silva Multi-Navigator.*

operation over a wider range of temperature.

### Datums

All units tested provide for standard Australian and important international datums. (See Info item on page 16.)

### Web sites

For more information, visit the following Web sites: [www.trimble.com/gps/sections/aa\\_f3.htm](http://www.trimble.com/gps/sections/aa_f3.htm) (Trimble, how GPS works) and [joe.mehaffey.com](http://joe.mehaffey.com) (useful reference and help).

John Pappas is an engineer, a computer controller of machine tools, a traveller, a bushwalker, a skier, an investor and a small farmer. Today he is more concerned by our catchments, forests, Landcare, WaterWatch and ethical shareholders' groups. He uses GPS units to confirm his position on 'bushwalks' around logging coupes.

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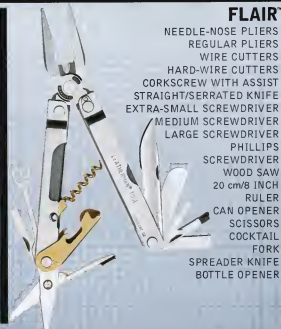
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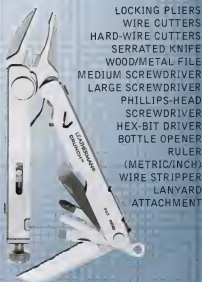
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# Multifunction tools

Darren Green reviews outdoors enthusiasts' tools of the trade

**THE MULTIFUNCTION TOOL, OR MULTITOOL,** appears to be the modern version of the Swiss Army Knives that were fashionable a few years ago and are still popular. Like Swiss Army Knives, these multitools have been 'bastardised' with cheap imitations within the \$10 to \$30 price range available in the shops. The workmanship and quality of materials prove the old saying that you get what you pay for. Demand for these cheap tools—typically they are purchased as gifts—is very high all the same. However, the person who wants a tool that will perform in the field may be a little more discerning and may look for something reliable and, for this reason, I have not considered the cheaper price range in this review. Multifunction tools open up a new aspect to marketing; some manufacturers go a step further and add a great number of tools to an already complex item, or perhaps turn a good product into a gimmick. The basis, or logic, behind multitools is good. I shall point out what to look for when purchasing such a tool.

## Number of tools

A great number of tools is not necessarily desirable and the term 'number of tools' may often mislead. Just how some of the manufacturers count the tools on their product can be difficult to judge. For example, one set of pliers may work like needle-nose pliers and standard pliers, thus giving the wrong impression that there are two sets of pliers. Similarly, multiple slotted screwdrivers reduce the variety of tools. What you should consider is the number of tools that you might use. While each person has his or her end use in mind, ask yourself: 'Will I use the lanyard attachment? How many slotted screwdrivers will I need? Will I use that little notch they call a wire stripper?' and so on. Examine each tool and consider its productive end use, not whether it's handy or not. Excluding unnecessary tools will help to keep the weight down; however, most models may have one or two tools you won't use and this cannot always be avoided. Doubling up on tools may also be overlooked; for example, some multitools have tweezers and scissors, but as your first aid kit has these too, a multitool without these items may be a better choice for those conscious about weight.

## Tool selection

The tool-selection rating is based on the tools considered to be functional, or used productively in the field. Some handy tools are: pliers for grabbing, holding, or crimping; knives for cutting, scraping, routing, carving, notching and digging; Phillips-head and slot-

ted screwdrivers, keeping in mind that slotted screws are becoming less popular in Australia due to the range of Phillips-head self-drilling screws and cordless drill/driver technology; files to smooth, shape, roughen or remove sharp edges; a ruler for measuring. Less likely to be used are items such as saws, scissors, punches, wire strippers, and so on. For example, for sawing a branch greater than 40 millimetres in diameter to use a multitool would not even be contemplated. It

would take less time and energy to break the branch under the heel of your foot! Some tools are perhaps handy in situations such as repairing motor vehicles; however, most vehicles have their own tool kit.

## Design

It is important to be aware of the design and use of tools; disorders relating to repetitive motion and poor posture are now at the forefront of health and safety thinking, and after a day's bushwalk the last thing you need is extra strain or blisters resulting from a minor repair job. Some (but not all) tools are ergonomically designed to reduce the risk of repetitive strain injuries. A few tips to remember: Distribute your grip over as wide an area as possible with little or no pressure on the sides of the fingers. Do not use tools that are slippery or wet, dig into the palm of your hand, have unbalanced or uncomfortable gripping handles—and avoid excessive force or grip when using these tools. A well-designed tool should keep your wrists straight and your elbows close to your body. With this in mind, go through the motions of gripping and using the tool. Fold out every tool to see how accessible each one is. Is the motion smooth? Does it cut or pinch your skin? When the tools are unfolded, do they lock into place—or will they fold up under normal use?

## Value for money

The value-for-money rating is based on an overall assessment of the multitool. It includes uses beyond the field such as minor automotive and electrical repairs and use around the home, as well as simplicity of design and the quality of materials and workmanship. The price may vary widely between shops and should be used as a guide only. 📌

Darren Green enjoys bushwalking, rockclimbing and nature photography, which is usually a response to his chief interest in the study of reptiles. He has worked in the hardware industry for almost two decades and is employed at Mitre 10.

*The Leatherman Wave is at the top end of the market.*



## Multitools

	Number of tools	Tool selection	Design	Value for money	Approx price, \$
<b>Cooper Tools USA</b>					
Trailall pro #	14	●●●	●●●	●●●	110
<b>Gerber USA</b>					
Multi-Link	17	●●●	●●	●●	170
Scout	18	●●●	●●	●●	170
<b>Leatherman USA</b>					
Mini-Tool	11	●●	●●	●●	100
Pocket survival tool	13	●●	●●	●●	120
Super tool	17	●●●	●●	●●	155
Wave	18	●●●	●●●	●●●	210
<b>SOG USA</b>					
Pocket power plier	10	●●	●●	●●	90
Paratool	15	●●	●●	●●	120
Power plier	14	●●●	●●●	●●●	135
<b>Victorinox Switzerland</b>					
Swiss tool	23	●●●	●●	●●●	155

● average ●● better ●●● best # Available in hardware shops. All products excluding the Trailall pro are found in most outdoors/camping and disposal shops (plus some hardware and fishing shops). The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made.

## Key-ring multitools

	Number of tools	Tool selection	Design	Value for money	Approx price, \$
<b>Leatherman USA</b>					
Micra	10	●●●	●●	●●●	\$5
<b>Seiber Tool USA</b>					
M3	7	●●●	●●	●●	\$0
<b>Swiss-Tech USA</b>					
Microtool	7	●●	●●	●●	\$0

● average ●● better ●●● best These products are found in most outdoors/camping and disposal shops (plus some hardware and fishing shops). The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made.

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## What is a National Park?



Current proposals for a mine within the Gammon Ranges National Park in South Australia have exposed the fact that in reality this park doesn't have much protection. In 1982 several large extensions were made to the park under the description of it being a multiple-use National Park. Permitted uses in what is primarily a wilderness area include mining, grazing and oil and gas extraction.

The present proposal is for an open-cut mine beside Weetootla Gorge in the southern section of the park. This gorge contains permanent springs and a site significant for the Adynamathanha (Aboriginal) community. At present one mining company holds the mining leases for the area. Transfer to and subsequent development of the magnesite resource

are being negotiated by a second mining company.

This proposal will be seen by developers as a test case—if this mine proceeds, development of other reserved areas can also be expected. Multiple-use parks in South Australia comprise 78 per cent of all National Parks in the State. The lease transfer is being considered by the Environment Minister at present.

John Chapman

### ▲ Act now

Write to South Australian Minister for Environment and Heritage Iain Evans, GPO Box 1047, Adelaide, SA 5001.

development include the Main Range adjacent to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko; the Deua forest wilderness including the Upper Deua and Tuross Rivers; and the Buckenbowa Wilderness connecting the Budawang with the Deua Wilderness.

In northern NSW consultation on 32 areas totalling about 792 000 hectares is planned to begin in September. Highlights include the headwaters of the Mann River, Levers Plateau on the Border Ranges and the Doyles River west of Wauchope. A further five areas totalling 226 000 hectares considered in other parts of NSW include parts of the Pilliga forest in the central west of the State.

Nearly 1.5 million hectares of wilderness are at stake, so the Carr Government needs to hear your support. Ask Premier Bob Carr to finish the job!

Andrew Cox

### ▲ Act now

Write to the Honourable Bob Carr, Premier of NSW, Parliament House, Sydney, NSW 2000, saying that you seek the completion of the east coast wilderness assessments. Demand that all wilderness that meets the Wilderness Act criteria be protected. Ask Carr fully to protect the wilderness flagged by the CFW's Wilderness 2000 protection plan.

## Mt Cripps on the table!

As a result of a hearing with the Tasmanian Department of Mines, now known as Mineral Resources Tasmania (MRT), the mining company concerned has reduced the area of its proposed exploration lease from 29 to 13 square kilometres in the west of the karst region (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 77). The company chose this region because it had not been systematically explored for caves.

The mediation session heard objections from North West (Tasmania) Walking Club that a quarry in this region would be visible from Barn Bluff and Mt Romulus. Objections from cavers were that although the area hadn't been explored on the ground, air photos show that the unique polygonal karst extends into this section and it is likely that the area similarly contains further examples of its unique cave fauna. Proposals for mining limestone and dolomite elsewhere in Tasmania were suggested but the company ruled this option out as being too expensive. MRT has given opponents time to lodge objections to the current exploration lease. Australian Speleological Federation Conservation Secretary and Southern Tasmanian Cavekeepers member Arthur Clarke is in the process of doing just that.

Stephen Bunton

## Bushland disappearing

An estimated 80 million trees were felled yearly in Queensland between 1997 and 1999 Melbourne's *Age* reported on 12 July. Satellite imagery commissioned by the Queensland Natural Resources Department shows that an average 408 000 hectares of native vegetation were bulldozed each year, up from an average of 340 000 hectares cleared annually between 1995 and 1997.

The Queensland Government has introduced but failed to enact legislation to control clearing on freehold land. The failure to enact the law has prompted panic clearing by many farmers who fear that it will restrict their property development options.

## NSW wilderness areas need your support

The New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) is undertaking public

consultation on up to 53 wilderness areas—either new or expanded—that may conclude more than a decade of efforts to assess wilderness on the NSW east coast. Most of the new areas were identified but not protected during the recent east coast regional forest assessments. They range from the 105 000 hectare Yengo wilderness west of Sydney to the 'icon' forest regions such as East Chaelundi at Chandlers Creek near Coffs Harbour and smaller areas and additions overlooked in previous assessments.

Conservation groups, coordinated by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness (CFW), are pushing for the full recognition and declaration of all 53 areas under the NSW Wilderness Act as part of the Wilderness 2000 Campaign.

Consultation on 16 southern NSW wilderness regions totalling about 450 000 hectares was planned to begin in July but has been delayed for perhaps several months. Areas requiring protection from future de-

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## WOOD-CHIPS

\* An initiative to protect areas in south-western **Victoria** was launched by Rupert Hamer in Portland on 6 May. Environment Victoria reported. Hamer described the **Great Southwest Parks System** as 'a visionary idea whose time, I think, has come'. The proposal is for a system of interconnected, permanently protected areas covering 170 000 hectares in a great curve from the ocean near Portland, north to the Little Desert National Park and across to the Grampians.

### ▲ Act now

To support the initiative, write to Environment Victoria, 19 O'Connell St, North Melbourne, Vic 3051 or to your local politicians, or newspapers.

\* The **285 hectares** excised from the **Falls Creek region** of Victoria's **Alpine National Park** in November 1997 were returned to the park on 2 June, the Victorian National Parks Association reported. This occurred when the National Parks Amendment Bill was passed in the State's Upper House. In addition, over 19 000 hectares of the **Wongungarra catchment** are to be protected.

\* **Koalas** were listed as a threatened species under the **US Endangered Species Act** in May. This adds to pressure on the subsidiary of a US company over logging in Gippsland's Strzelecki hills, Victoria, the *Age* reported on 11 May. The subsidiary's holdings include native forest that is the home of the only Victorian koalas not descended from the inbred Phillip Island colony.

\* Andrew Cox reports that the **White Paper** proposing amendments to the NSW **National Parks and Wildlife Act** (see Green Pages, Wild no 77) was not released for public comment as planned. Environment groups speculate that this is due to the establishment of an inquiry into the NPWS following the release of the findings of the coronial inquiry into the 1997 landslide at Thredbo. All submissions received so far will be taken into account.

\* In June we were informed that the **Brazilian congress** was voting on a project that would reduce the **Amazon forest** to 50 per cent of its size. The area to be deforested would be mainly used for farming. More than 160 000 square kilometres deforested with the same purpose are abandoned and becoming deserts.

\* Victoria's three independent MPs are pushing for residents to have the **right to sue enterprises polluting the environment** according to the *Age* on 18 May. The proposed amendment to the *Environment Protection Act* means that the Environment Protection Authority would no longer be the only party with legal recourse. ☐

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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# Walkers work for the bush

Bushwalkers' key role in conservation documented

## Battle for the Bush: The Blue Mountains, the Australian Alps and the Origins of the Wilderness Movement

by Geoff Mosley (Colong Foundation, 1999, RRP \$27.50 including postage). To order, phone (02) 9518 6154 or (02) 9299 7341.

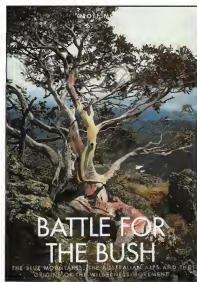
Bushwalking has been an important source of environmental consciousness and action in Australia for several generations. Geoff Mosley (see profile in *Wild* no 1) was for many years involved in conservation activities, particularly through the Australian Conservation Foundation of which he was Director for 13 years, but also through many other organisations.

In this book Mosley traces the lengthy campaigns in relation to the Blue Mountains and the Australian Alps (including East Gippsland and New South Wales's south-east forests). Notable in these accounts is the involvement of bushwalkers.

In NSW the contribution of Myles Dunphy (father of Milo—see profile in *Wild* no 3) looms large. It was his vision for a National Park covering the Blue Mountains which led to the reservation of considerable parts of that region for nature recreation, and then he conducted a lengthy campaign for the Kosciuszko National Park. Myles's activities included what must have been a superb walking trip from Nowra to Harrietville in 1919 to 1920 over several months. His extensive experience of many areas he lobbied to save gave authority to his representations.

In Victoria the struggle to obtain the Alpine National Park was long and difficult, and at times the courage to hold to a magnificent vision waned in the face of government and public indifference and hostility. The National Park is still limited, both in area (it does not extend to the Baw Baws or Mt Buffalo, for example) and in that grazing is still permitted (at huge subsidies) in spite of the known damage. Large areas of the park have been subjected to logging. Downhill skiing resorts are not part of the Alpine National Park, but continue to have a major and detrimental impact on it, even justifying the (recently repealed) excision of the important and sensitive Mt McKay area of the Bogong High Plains from the park (see page 87). The extensive access by four-wheel-drive vehicles remains a major concern for

those who care for wild places. But what has been gained is very important, and again bushwalkers played a key role: Dick Johnson's *The Alps at the Crossroads*, written as it was by a keen walker, gave key impetus to the debate.



Mosley's walk from Canberra to Victoria's Mt Howitt also publicised the unity of these alpine areas and the need for a park to protect the whole.

The forests of south-east NSW and of East Gippsland, too, have been subject to lengthy campaigns and Mosley's perspective on these struggles is fascinating.

The great virtue of this book is that it places into international and chronological perspective the many aspects of the struggle for our wild places which has now been persisting for generations. It is hard to imagine anyone better qualified to write it than Mosley.

Perhaps one day soon we will see the Australian Alps and the forest of the south-eastern corner of Australia inscribed on the World Heritage List as so many reports have said they should be.

Brian Walters

## The Heysen Trail: A Walker's Guide

by Terry Lavender (Bookends Books, 1999, RRP \$21.95 from 136 Unley Rd, Unley, SA 5061).

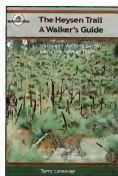
No one is better qualified to pen a guide to South Australia's Heysen Trail than Terry

Lavender. He was there at the trail's conception, assisted in its difficult birth and, more than 20 years on, he continues to be a dotting father.

While the claim that the 1500 kilometre Heysen Trail is the world's longest 'footpath' might be debatable, there is no doubting its popularity. This is especially true of the 330 kilometre stretch this book covers, from the Barossa Valley, south through the Mt Lofty Ranges, to the Fleurieu Peninsula's rugged southern shores.

This is the first in a planned series of volumes documenting the trail's progress to the Flinders Ranges. Written in an engaging style, the guidebook reflects the author's breadth of experience and eye for historical snippets. Unfortunately, the accompanying maps are less informative and do not give the reader a real feeling for the terrain. (Detailed maps are, however, available separately from the book's author.)

Quentin Chester



## Namadgi & Tidbinbilla Classics: Tough Bushwalks in Canberra's High Country

by Graeme Barrow (Dagraja Press, 2000, RRP \$19.80 from 3 Verco St, Hackett, ACT 2602).

The latest in a long line of books from Barrow describing one-day walks near Canberra. This is his best yet with the 21 walks complemented by clear maps and illustrations, all in full colour. The walks are interesting as they include off track sections and visit many lesser known features. With slick production standards, this 84-page guidebook should be popular with walkers based in Canberra.

John Chapman



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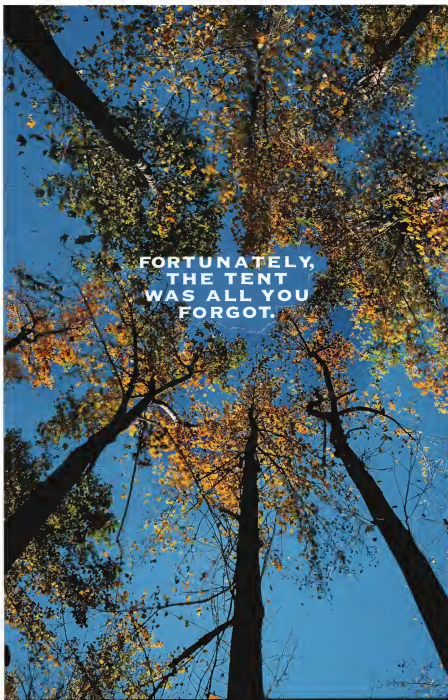
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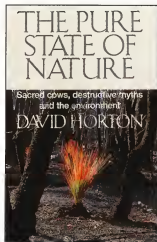
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## The Pure State of Nature: Sacred cows, destructive myths and the environment

by David Horton (Allen & Unwin, 2000, RRP \$21.91).

Who killed the megafauna? And did the Aborigines practise 'firestick farming'? And was the Australian landscape 'park like' when Europeans first arrived?



In debates about our environment and how we should deal with it, claims about Aboriginal treatment of the land are frequently made and have even been accepted as too obvious to be doubted.

Regular burning of the bush has been justified on the basis that indigenous Australians did this, and even that it is good for the environment. Even the horrendous loss of species as a result of grazing and logging has been supported on the basis that the Aborigines killed the megafauna, and this is all part of nature's processes.

These issues are important in Australia, affecting nature conservation, development and even such issues as Wik. Our whole concept of wilderness is to some extent affected by these issues: are we seeking to protect the environment as it was 200 years ago, or 50 000 years ago? These are not mere academic questions: the environment is where we live, and we cannot afford to get these things wrong.

In his feisty, vibrant style, which is a joy to read, David Horton, a prominent archaeologist, challenges the 'conventional wisdom' on these issues with authority and common sense. The book looks at the philosophical values underpinning many of the arguments which have been made in the past, and this makes his work particularly valuable.

In many ways *The Pure State of Nature* is a reply to Tim Flannery's book *The Future Eaters*, which has had immense popularity. Horton pulls apart almost every aspect of Flannery's theory.

Horton concludes that if you wish to burn bushland to protect buildings, do it as you would bulldoze a fire-break, but do not pretend that you are doing anything other than damage to the environment.

David Horton's book deserves to be widely reviewed in our understanding of Australia and its environment.

BW

## My Environmental Exposé

by Tyrone Thomas (Hill of Content, 2000, RRP \$21.91 from 86 Bourke St, Melbourne, Vic 3000).

Tyrone Thomas is well known throughout Australia for his walking guidebooks. In this latest book he invites walkers to appreciate some of his favourite walks, and guides not merely our steps on the track but our observation of what we see about us on the walks. This guide passionately asks us to feel the wonder of the natural environment and the threats to it.

Three main conservation messages are in this book: the need for legislation to protect our wild places from urban ugliness (there are some simple changes that could be made, particularly in preventing the proliferation of needless signage because authorities are afraid of legal liability), the wrong of recreational fishing (let's face it, it is merely hunting of a particular type of creature), and farming and grazing in arid outback areas (where this activity causes great damage and is also not economic without the large, effective subsidies made to the farmers concerned).

The book is not a mere polemic, but invites the walker to see the issues 'on the ground' with the author taking the reader to particular places where the message can be seen.

The book is sensitively written, and the track notes are, as always, very fine. This is a new type of guidebook for walkers, and Tyrone Thomas was just

the person to write it.

BW

## Don't Die in the Bush: the complete guide to Australian camping

by Sven Klinge & Adrian Hart (New Holland, 2000, RRP \$21.95).

This 132-page guide claims to update obsolete camping practices and include the latest advances. It does give a brief overview of most bush sports and includes some modern equipment such as Global Positioning System units but leaves out EPIRBs (emergency position-indicating radio beacons). While the advice is generally good it is

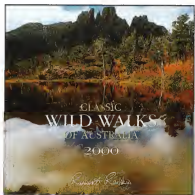
fairly brief and not very comprehensive. The suggestion to plan on walking three kilometres an hour is simply too brief and misleading. While mainly intended for novices, the frequent references to places only known to experienced walkers like 'Port Davey' is confusing. Overall, a reasonable effort for a first edition but it will need considerable attention to details before it can be considered a classic text in the how-to area.

JC

## Classic Wild Walks of Australia 2000 (double CD-ROM set)

(Rankin Publishers, 2000, RRP \$49.95 plus \$6 postage from PO Box 500, Summer Park, Qld 4074 or [www.rankin.com.au](http://www.rankin.com.au)).

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Brendon Eishold

## Environment Map of Australia

(Earth Systems, 2000, RRP \$33 [unlaminated], \$55 [laminated] from Suite 209, 1 Princess St, Kew, Vic 3101).

If you're passionate about the Australian environment and forever looking for facts to back up your arguments, look no further than the Earth Systems *Environment Map of Australia*. It is not only a colourful addition to any household wall but is packed full of information that would sober up even the most fervent capitalist about the current state of our environment.

BE

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.





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**Guy Cotter** wishes to announce that he is no longer a partner in Mt Aspiring Guides

and would like to wish Nick, Paul and Martin all the best for their future. Due to increased demand Guy will be focusing entirely on his company, Adventure Consultants Ltd, and for information on Guy's expeditions or New Zealand courses and ascents, contact Adventure Consultants, PO Box 97, Wanaka, NZ. Phone +64 3 443 8711, [www.adventure.co.nz](http://www.adventure.co.nz)

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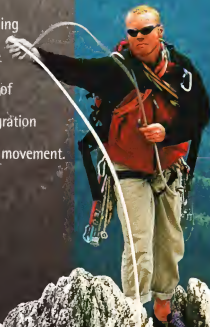
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